



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

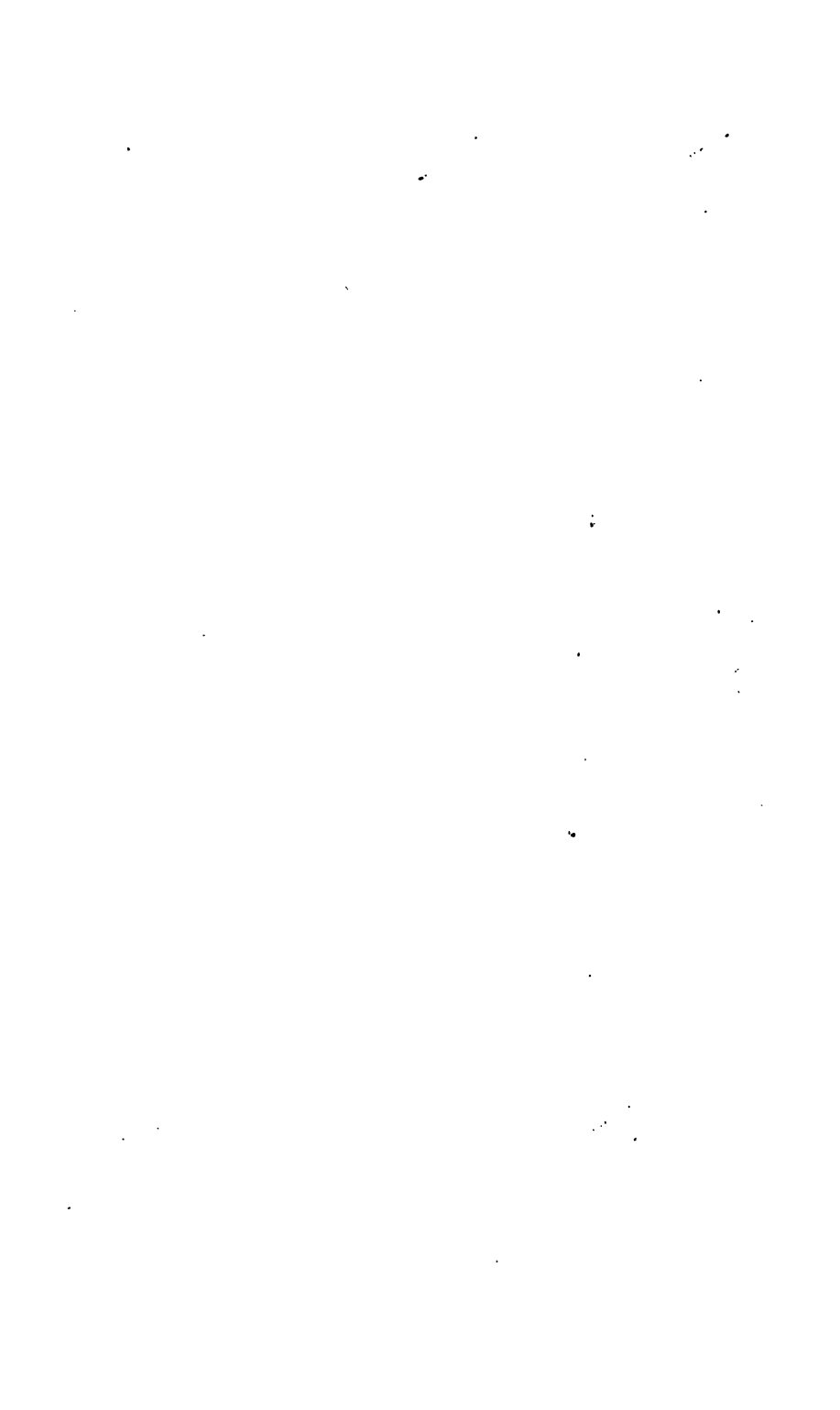




600069803W

THE MOTHER'S FAVOURITE.

VOL. III.



THE MOTHER'S FAVOURITE.

BY

S. RUSSELL WHITNEY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.



LONDON:
HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,
SUCCESSORS TO HENRY COLBURN,
13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.
1866.

The right of Translation is reserved.

250.6.238.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY MACDONALD AND TUGWELL,
BLENHEIM HOUSE.

CHAPTER I.

THE JOURNEY.

THE next day came, and soon brought the hour of six, at which time the Earl, Florence, and the little boy, all prepared for the journey, sat in the sitting-room awaiting the arrival of a cab, which was to convey them to the station.

"Shall we remain in London to-night, Henry?" said Florence.

"No, dearest, we must change into another train on another line as soon as we reach town," replied the Earl.

"Somehow, I feel desponding, when I should be full of hope and joy."

"What is the cause of that?" asked the Earl.

"I cannot tell; but I have a presenti-

ment of some evil. It is strange, is it not?"

"Very, indeed; you must throw off these silly feelings."

"I have tried, but cannot. Why should I have them, and you with me, in whom I have every trust?"

"Do not speak about it any more," replied the Earl, in an uneasy voice.

His heart had been touched by the implicit confidence of his wife, but he could not bring himself to yield to the pity and compassion which were on the point of springing up in his breast. The sacrifice would be too great, for to spare her would be to renounce Margaret. The die was cast, his plans were marked out, and he was resolved to execute them without flinching.

Florence said no more on the subject, but nevertheless thought much about it. At length the cab arrived to convey them to the station; they were not long in reaching London. At the terminus they again entered a cab, and drove to another

station. Florence, at the Earl's request, had not brought any servant with her. In about an hour and a half the train which they were in stopped at a small country town, at which place they found a carriage waiting to convey them to their destination. There were but few porters or persons about the station, and these few did the Earl studiously avoid. The luggage, the Earl said, was to be brought the next morning, so they did not delay, but at once got into the vehicle, and drove away. The luggage, in truth, had been left in London, by the orders of the Earl, who did not wish to have the trouble of it, and who feared, also, that it might delay him so long among the porters of the place, that they would be able at some future time to recognise him.

After they had driven about seven miles from where they started, they drew up before a gate, the coachman leaped down and opened it, and then regaining his seat, drove down a thickly-wooded avenue of oaks. As Florence glanced out of the

window, she involuntarily shuddered at the dreary scene before her, and it seemed to her as though every tree stretched out its huge branches towards her in warning and menace. In a few minutes more they stopped at the door of a large, mysterious-looking house. Not a light shone out from any of the windows—all was dark and gloomy, without a sign of life. The driver sprang from the box, and knocked at the house door; the only answer seemed to be the dismal echo, as it returned to the ear laden with mystery and gloom. At last the door slowly opened, displaying a woman of about forty-five, holding in her hand a candle. She was tall and meagre, with a cadaverous face, appearing more like a ghost than a living being of flesh and blood. The sight of her gave Florence a start of fear.

“Come,” said the Earl, “we must alight at once. You need not mind the darkness; when we are once in the house, it will all be right.”

Florence immediately obeyed, bringing

the child, who was asleep in her arms.

"Give him to me," said the Earl; "he is too heavy for you to carry."

"Oh! no, he is not; and he would wake up if he were disturbed," replied Florence.

They then entered the house, and found themselves in a spacious hall, which had the appearance of not having been used for a long time. The woman, whom the Earl called Mrs. Williams, conducted them to a room, which in former times had served for a breakfast-room; a bright ruddy fire was burning in the grate, giving forth a cheerful blaze. On a small table was spread a snowy cloth, on which was placed a tea-service for two. There had been prepared, by the Earl's order, a supper, to be ready in a few minutes after they should arrive, and this repast was very soon on the table.

Florence and the Earl sat down to discuss the meal before them. His lordship did ample justice to the good things, but Florence was too much agitated by the

passing events to allow her to have much appetite.

"Is this your house?" asked Florence, timidly.

"It is a place of mine, but not the one I live in. The house which is occupied by my mother is the one we are going to, and is some miles further on. I thought it would be better to remain here until morning, when we could proceed on our journey."

"How very kind of you; but I should not have minded the extra drive—we could go on now, if you do not mind," said Florence, hoping that he would consent, as she did not like this dreary house.

"We cannot, as the carriage and horses are gone. Although there are no servants, and everything looks so dull and dark, you will be able to pass a comfortable night," said the Earl.

"No doubt but what I shall; it is foolish for me to mind the gloominess of the place. After all, I prefer not meeting your mother to-night."

"So I thought."

"You are so kind, dearest Henry."

"No more so than you deserve."

"Do you really think so?"

"I do, darling Florence."

The repast was finished, and they drew their chairs close to the fire. The little boy, who had been laid on the couch near them, slept very peacefully and contentedly, and the fond mother would ever and anon turn her eyes towards the sweet child, letting them rest on him with tender glances. She had believed that it would be impossible for her to love him more than she had always done from the hour of his birth; but he had become doubly dear since she had noticed the interest he seemed to excite in his father's heart. Poor Florence had long since ceased to indulge in the dream, that her husband would love her for herself alone, and was quite willing to make use of any means for securing a little of that love which had once been offered her with so lavish a hand. Her boy was her sheet-anchor; but she now,

for the first time, regarded her own charms with complacency, and did not disdain, even, to have recourse to a little coquetry.

It was about half-past ten when they arrived at the house, and was now twenty minutes to twelve; but although they had had rather a fatiguing journey, there did not seem any desire on the part of either to go to bed. They appeared, on the contrary, to wish to defer the time of retiring as late as possible.

The Earl now arose to leave the room, saying that he would return very soon; and Florence being thus left to herself, naturally began to think over all that had occurred during the last two days. The announcement by her husband that he intended to acknowledge her to the world, was of the most pleasing nature, and had thrilled her whole being with joy. The thought of appearing openly as the wife of Sir Henry, was gratifying to her pride; but what pleased her most was the knowledge, that now her son need never fear any question as to his parentage. Then,

too, she reflected, her own family would at length learn what had become of the daughter whom they had long since given up as erring and lost. The proud moment was come, when she could look the world in the face without a blush; and the pleasure and happiness of this moment more than compensated for all the misery and suffering she had undergone for the last two years. Even in the midst of this delight, however, a small speck arose to mar the bright picture she had been making for herself; and this sprang from the mysteriousness of the journey which she had performed with her husband, and the fact that he had not allowed her to mention to her servants where they were going, or his real name and rank. At the time it did not seem at all strange; but now it wore an air of mystery, which she could not solve.

These thoughts crowded upon her mind with terrible force; and, in addition to this, Florence remembered the extraordinary scene which had occurred between her and

the Earl some months since ; and the fearful question suggested itself, whether he had lately been concealing his true feelings, and was now, under the pretext of taking her to his home, intending to commit some wrong. She trembled at the thought.

The strangeness of this uninhabited house, together with the not over-pleasant appearance of the woman who let them in at the door, made her feel anything but comfortable.

Poor Florence ! you cannot trust the one who should be your protection against the world—such has been his conduct, that fear makes the wife tremble with her husband near.

The Earl, on leaving the room, bent his steps toward the kitchen, where he found the man who had driven the carriage, and also the woman, who appeared to be the only one who had been in the house when the party arrived. The man was a thorough London ruffian, one who gained his living by preying on society. He was about five feet eight inches in height, broad-shouldered,

and full-chested, with powerful arms, and possessed that great amount of physical strength which is so strangely bestowed on many ruffians who have passed all their lives in dissipation in the lowest haunts of London. A low, narrow forehead, dark eyes, turned-up nose, and a sensual mouth, with a dangerous expression lurking about his face, complete the ugly picture.

The woman was taller, very thin, with her cheek-bones standing out in great prominence; her eyes were faded blue, her hair was brown, her forehead high, and she had a good nose and mouth; but there was something in her expression which was most repellant to an observer, and had excited Florence's fear.

These two worthies were man and wife, brought by the Earl from London to do some deed for him; and he could not have selected better tools, for they shrank from nothing, and their mode of life, from earliest infancy, had inured them to their profession, belonging, as they did, to a class which preys upon the vitals of society,

drawing from it by the foulest means its sustenance.

Inhabiting the vilest dens in the worst part of London, hiding by day from the searching hand of justice, which is ever about for their detection, by night they plundered, prowled, and caroused, making merry over their sins. To such persons did the Earl apply for assistance in his hour of need, and gained their aid by gold. The man, who was a decayed prize-fighter, he had known some years, and had, a few weeks since, sought him out and bought the services of himself and his wife, who was equally well-fitted for the work that was to be done.

"Good evening, Mr. Smith," said the villain, addressing the Earl as he entered.

By this name had his lordship called himself to them. The woman made a curtsy as she arose from her seat.

"Good evening, Tom; and how are you, Mrs. Williams?" said the Earl, speaking to the woman.

"Very well, sir; I hope you are well."

Mrs. Williams then offered her illustrious visitor a chair, which he took, at the same time motioning them to be seated.

"Is everything prepared, Mrs. Williams? You have arranged the room I spoke of?" said the Earl.

"I 'ave. Tom says as 'ow it is all right."

"That it is, Mr. Smith," said Tom; "my old woman never lets things go slack—do you, Sall?"

"No, that I don't."

"You, Tom, have done the other thing—you know what I mean, don't you?"

The Earl was pale, and could hardly finish the sentence. His companions took no notice of this momentary spasm; and the woman, interrupting, observed,

"The lady, sir, may be unwilling to part with the little 'un."

"That can be easily managed; she will follow my directions," said the Earl.

He now rose, and left the husband and wife to themselves, and entered the breakfast-room, where he saw Florence, with a sad dark shadow on her face.

"Can she suspect anything?" thought the Earl. "No, that is impossible; yet if she has not forgotten the scene of some months ago, there would be good reason for her to think these proceedings very strange. But what if she should? It is too late for her to take a backward step. She is here, and must abide the consequences."

"You refused to save me from ruin," he added, as he gazed vindictively on the half-unconscious woman before him; "when everything tended to my downfall, when the fates seemed to take pleasure in drawing around me their fatal meshes, then, then did you repulse with scorn my entreaties, and even though my tears had been drops of blood, you would have turned from my prayers with disdain and contempt. Now has my time come—it is now my hour of triumph, which you will never know in this world. Concession on your part would have made you secure of life; you little thought that I would go so far, but there you were de-

ceived, as all are likely to be who cross my path. You were determined to be Lady Hargreave, and to sully the pure blood of the Hargreaves by placing some day at its head your children. You have stood in my way, and all stumbling-blocks must be removed."

"Oh! Henry! Henry!" exclaimed Florence, as she awoke from her stupor, and saw her husband, "I am so glad that you have come back. I do not like to be alone in this great gloomy house; there seems to be something terrible in every part of these old walls. Do not think me foolish, but since you have been away I seemed to see evil rising out of the very floors!"

"You are childish to allow yourself to be so easily worked upon by these foolish fancies of yours," said the Earl.

"I had such a horrible dream last night."

"What was it, dearest?—come, tell me?"

"I dare not," said Florence, trembling.

"Nay, darling, remember our vow,

that all our joys and troubles were to be mutual."

"If you like, I will do so. I dreamed that I was sleeping in a strange house, in which no one seemed to live; I had been asleep for some time, when I awoke and saw a man standing beside the bed, with a small club in his hand, just going to strike me; I jumped out and screamed, when the man struck me, but in the confusion only hit my shoulders. I sprang by him, and rushed into the next room, where another man was standing. Suddenly the second man turned into one like yourself, and I then felt safe from all pursuit. But, horrible to say, the hand from which I expected succour struck me down with a knife; and I then awoke to find it all a dream. Was it not terrible, Henry?" murmured Florence, as she finished.

"Horrible indeed!" said the Earl, who had listened like one bewildered to his wife's half-broken utterances.

"Oh!" groaned the Earl, to himself,

"I wish that I had never met her; but now it is too late to regret anything; my course is now marked out—I must pursue it, or suffer the agony of wounded pride, which I cannot bear. What could have made her fancies weave her dreams into a story, which is so like, and yet unlike the future, with such terrible accuracy? It is well that she does not give credit to this extraordinary nightmare. She has some slight dread, but no tangible suspicions of me. It is a thorny path that I am pursuing, and one fraught with danger; but it leads to one of flowers and security, if success and secrecy crown my efforts."

Recovering himself, the Earl said,

"Is it not wonderful that people should have such dreams? I myself have often thought that my best friend was on the point of doing me some great wrong, when I dreamed, but on awaking found him to be the same tried and trusty one as of yore, more valued after the short-lived suspicions of a dream."

"It is very strange and unaccountable, but it makes me sad that sleep should accuse one so loved as you," replied Florence.

"You do not, surely, give any credence to this idle fancy of a disturbed mind?"

"Oh! no, dearest Henry; how could I for a moment allow a suspicion to rest on the father of my babe, the husband of my love, and the protector of my life? No, no, that could never be!"

With this she burst into a flood of tears, from which the Earl could not withdraw her, for so sad and mournful did she seem, that one would have thought that her heart would break.

"Do not weep, dearest love; calm yourself, darling wife. You must not give way to this foolish thought; it is unkind to me."

"Do not say that, dear Henry; you know that I would not wrong you with a single suspicion. I would rather perish in ignorance than live to see the reality!"

At this point the Earl was fearfully

agitated; he could scarcely sit still, being the prey to such terrible emotions. If this occurs now, what will be the state of your mind after the awful tragedy has become an accomplished fact? Deliberate well—ponder deeply before the fatal step is taken, and all is past, too late ever to be recalled! Honour, vows, and truth stand behind to draw you back, but, alas! they are unseen, their entreaties are unheard! Your eyes are blind to all that mortal should hold as most sacred and holy—your ears are deaf to every counsel that humanity and duty pour into them! Pride and passion stand before you, luring you onward, and are listened to with all attention; not a whisper of theirs escapes your ear, not a sound is unheard. The pride of family and position points with its finger of withering scorn towards the fond and trusting wife you swore to love, cherish, and protect; it bids you do a deed which will ever after rest deep on your heart—a stain that all the waters of repentance can never wash away. Passion, new-born in your soul, has

filled the place that once was held by the one who now has lost all in you. The unhallowed love which now fills your being will only blast the happiness of the one on whom it has fallen. How terrible is it that one sweet face should tempt you to destroy another fair and loving woman. Alas! that such things should ever be!

Pride and passion hold the Earl enthralled in their grasp; they have overcome the little good feeling which nature had bestowed upon him.

Florence was now calmer; she had risen to take her baby boy from off the couch where he had been slumbering during the evening. He was still asleep, and the fond mother pressed the infant to her breast, with sad forebodings of the future.

The Earl could not endure a continuance of this scene, so he proposed, as it was near one o'clock, that his wife should retire to bed; but to this Florence gave only a reluctant consent, after being urged for some time.

“ You are tired to-night, dearest, so you

had better allow the woman to take charge of the baby," said the Earl.

"I would rather have him with us," replied the unwilling mother; "somehow I cannot bear the idea of his being away from us in this strange place."

"You are unkind, Florence, constantly to recur to this house, as if it were a place to which I ought not to have brought you," said the Earl in a tone of reproach.

"I do not mean it, really I do not, dear Henry; but then——"

"I will finish the sentence 'but then'—you do not place any confidence in me."

"It is not that," replied Florence.

"Well, then, you will let Henry sleep with this woman, who is henceforth to have charge of the dear child?"

"If you like, let it be so."

"I think, then, you had better retire."

At this moment Mrs. Williams entered the room, in answer to the bell which the Earl had rung.

"Did you wish me, ma'am?" said the woman, as she stood before Florence.

"She wishes you to take charge of the child to-night," said the Earl.

"I shall be very glad," answered the woman, advancing to take the baby.

Florence drew back involuntarily, but at a look from the Earl, resigned the child to Mrs. Williams, not without, however, many a sigh, and long, lingering kisses, as if her heart were being melted into the child. The woman then retired. In a few minutes Florence and the Earl left the room, and ascended the broad old staircase of oak, which gave forth dismal sounds as their feet fell upon its smooth surface. They passed through the corridor into a large room, containing a bed, and the other furniture necessary to a sleeping apartment. This, which was intended for Florence, had lofty pannelled walls, and two doors, one of which opened upon the corridor, whilst the other gave admittance to a small dressing-room. Two candles were burning on the dressing-table, and filled the gloomy expanse with uncouth shadows.

Kissing his wife good-night, with more than usual tenderness, the Earl retired to his own chamber.

Being thus left to herself, Florence soon got ready for bed. She then put out the lights, and knelt by the bedside, to implore the assistance of Heaven, and to thank the Almighty for his numerous and ever-flowing kindnesses. Such as the following was the prayer of the doomed one :

“I thank thee, O Lord, for the numerous blessings that Thou hast in Thy great mercy seen fit to bestow on me. I pray that Thou wilt still continue to hold over me Thy arm of strength, protecting Thy humble servant from the dangers that press around her. I entreat Thee, O great and beneficent God, to look with kindness on my beloved child. Give him, I pray, health, strength, and prosperity in life, if it should seem good unto Thee to spare him to this world; and, above all, I pray that he may be endued from on high with that strength

of soul which is so necessary for his future welfare in the life to come. If I should not be spared unto my babe, as a worldly protector, I pray that Thou wouldest, in Thy mercy, raise up one who will guide his youthful steps in the path of right, bringing him to man's estate with the fear of his God before his eyes. Make him, I beg Thee, a follower of Thy train of light, that he may, after running in this world a goodly and righteous race, be received in the heaven of Thy love. I ask, O High and Mighty Ruler of the Universe, that my husband may be taken under Thy protection, and that he may flee from the corrupt things of this world, and cleave unto the life to come, which would be unto him a cause of never-ending joy. I feel, good Lord, that there is gathering around me some mysterious and unavoidable danger too strong for me to avert, unless assisted by the omnipotent hand of Providence. I resign myself to Thy care, knowing that, come what may, the

most certain security is in Thee, and Thee alone. Relying on Thy wonderful and never-ending mercy, I await with calmness the issue of life's struggle, having the blessed consolation, that as Christ shed his most holy and sacred blood in the behalf of the world, that there is for me, a poor sinner, hope everlasting. I pray that Thou wilt bless and protect my dearly-beloved family. I feel as though the morrow's sun were never to rise on me in this life; and I humbly beg that should this be my last hour in this world, I may have a blessed eternity in the one to come. I ask all this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen."

We will now leave this pure and innocent being for a short time, for the purpose of seeing what the rest of the party are doing. Truly, Florence was a lamb among howling wolves.

CHAPTER II.

THE DREAM AND ITS MEANING.

THE Earl was seated in the room we have before mentioned, in deep abstracted thought ; his elbow resting on the arm of his chair, and his head supported by his hand being placed on his forehead. It was evident that he was the subject of fearful and conflicting emotions, which he found impossible to subdue. The Earl continued in this state for above an hour, when the clock in the hall warned him that it was now two o'clock. He started from his seat, but sank back, fearful of what to do. As he was on the edge of the deed, he started back in terror, from the contem-

plation of the very crime which he had planned with so much composure.

Was it love, was it humanity, which had such power over this man? Alas! no; it was the fear of detection which had raised this storm in the breast of the Earl. He had with him a flask of brandy, and from that he sought for comfort; time after time did he apply the liquid to his mouth, and from its effects gained the celebrated Dutch courage.

In about three quarters of an hour from this time, the figure of a man, carrying in his hand a dark lantern, might have been seen slowly and stealthily ascending the broad oak staircase. When he had gained the corridor, he at once directed his footsteps towards the room where Florence slept. As he approached the apartment, a ray of moonlight shot across his sight, coming in through a window. The man was startled at first, but soon recovered and pressed onward. His hand is now on the handle—he turns it, but the door refuses to yield.

"It is locked on the inside," muttered the man, with a fearful curse. The dark figure retraces his steps, and soon he joins another man; they whisper together for a moment, when it is determined to enter by the other door. Acting on this resolution, they attempt to carry out the plan; the door is tried, but, like the other, resists all their efforts. The two figures relinquish the work, and look with dismay into each other's faces.

"Is it all up, or must we break down the cursed thing?" says one of the persons.

"No, that would never do," replied the other.

"Will you go no further, or do you wish the thing to be done in daylight?"

"No, no; wait a moment, I have another plan."

"What may that be?"

"Follow me," was the response.

Leading the way, the last speaker conducted his companion through a large square room, and thence into a narrow

passage, at the end of which he stopped. Then taking the light, narrowly examined the wall; after continuing this scrutiny for some minutes, a gleam of satisfaction shot across his face. "I have it," he murmured to himself. He handed back the lantern to his comrade, who at once made it dark.

"Now, Tom, you may enter the room by this spring door. I will await your coming out."

"Which way does the bed lie from here, sir?"

This was soon explained, to the man's entire satisfaction, and after a few hurried whispers he entered the apartment. The other remained on the outside, to await the result, and give what assistance might be necessary after the deed had been committed.

Through the half-drawn curtains of one of the windows, the pale light of the moon threw into the room a soft and dreamy haze, which made the objects in the apartment visible to the eye. One

ray fell across the bed on which Florence was sleeping ; it served as a guide to the intruder, who advanced as noiselessly as a cat, until he reached the bedside. He was on the point of striking the terrible blow, when his arm was stayed by the beauteous sight before him.

Florence was indeed most lovely, as she slept. Her fair complexion somewhat pale from anxiety, her rosy lips, her white neck, and her glorious golden hair that lay about in masses, made up a picture so sweet, so fair, and so innocent, that the murderer felt for a moment some compunctions of conscience at the deed he was to commit, and, to his own surprise, he found himself retracing his steps, until he had rejoined the Earl, who was sitting, his face the colour of cold grey stone, in the room in which he and Florence had supped.

“ Ah ! ” said the Earl, as the man entered, “ your blow was sure ! I heard no cry ! ” And then he continued, in a horribly hoarse whisper, “ Did she open her eyes ? — her blue, blue eyes ? ”

The man stood for a few moments awkwardly fumbling a short cudgel he held in his hands, and at length replied,

“Well, you see, sir, I was just going to strike, when the moonlight fell across her face, and she lay there so like—so like——”

“And you did nothing, then?”

“No, I couldn’t just then. I must wait an hour or two, till that moon gets behind the old clock-tower.”

A momentary expression of relief passed over the Earl’s countenance, as though a feather from the wing of his guardian angel, who had long since winged her flight, had just fallen and touched him. But in the next instant a storm of passion swept over his features, and he roared out,

“Knave! fool! rascal! Have you taken my money, and mean me to do the work myself?”

“Now, sir,” replied the man, with a dangerous, sullen expression, “none of that language. It will be all right when I have had a glass or two of brandy.”

And with that he retired.

For some little time after this the men sat gloomily apart in their several rooms, fiercely pouring down their throats glass after glass of ardent spirit, when they were each startled by a scream, or rather a long, melancholy wail, which flooded the house with a deluge of horror and despair, and then all was still.

There was as great a difference in the action of the two men as they listened to this strange, sudden cry, as there was between their several social positions; but the difference did not proceed from that cause.

The low London ruffian started up with a great oath, in which there was an accent of pleasure, and exclaimed,

“Ah! and so the swell has done it himself! Couldn't wait even an hour! Well, I'm precious glad of it. But if he thinks that he will bilk me of the other half of the money, I'm——”

The remainder of this elegant sentence was drowned in a copious draught of brandy.

The Earl, as we have said, acted in a very different way, for as soon as the cry reached his ears, he buried his head in his hands on the table before him, and strove to shut it out. Strove! strove! strove! but how in vain! It swarmed about him like a mighty whirlwind, and bore him, as it seemed to him, up the oaken staircase, along the gloomy corridor, into Florence's room. Then, as he strove to throw himself down by the bed-side, and call upon her to forgive him, it swept him away from the house, across hill and field and moorland, to the pleasant villa at Richmond; and from thence to a bright busy street in Oxford, where Florence had first met him; and from thence—for there was no rest, none! none!—to the grounds of Brompton Court, where he and his brother had been happy, innocent boys. And when it had done this, it whirled him back to the gloomy room in the deserted mansion, and left him there, a pale despairing wretch!

“Oh! why did not the villain turn

coward?" he murmured, as he raised his head from between his hands, and gazed with a stony stare into the dim half-light. And then, after a moment's pause, he started up, and rushed into the room occupied by the woman called Mrs. Williams, who had charge of his son.

The child had that moment awoke. The poor little boy was frightened by his strange companion, and cried for his mother. The father could hear the tiny voice call "Mama! mama!" but he silently beckoned to the woman to follow him, and was soon in the stable-yard, where there were a carriage and horses, without any attendant.

The child and Mrs. Williams hastily entered the carriage, whilst the Earl mounted the box, and the party soon left the park, taking another direction from the one by which the Earl had arrived that evening. The drive before them was about eighteen miles, and it was now about four o'clock, and they wished to accomplish it by half-past six, so as to

take a train which left the station at ten minutes to seven. They succeeded in accomplishing this. During the drive the little boy had been very restless, constantly calling for his mamma, until the Earl was almost driven mad by the repeated mention of that name.

By the time that they reached the station, however, the babe had fallen asleep, exhausted by its own cries and restlessness. The Earl and child, accompanied by Mrs. Williams, were seated in the train at about twelve minutes to seven, and reached London at nine, when they separated; the Earl taking the child with him, after having dismissed the woman with a full purse; but his lordship did not observe a female enter a Hansom, and follow him to his lodgings. This was Mrs. Williams, who had been instructed by her husband to discover, if possible, who their employer really was.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHILD.

AFTER leaving the station, Lord Merwyn was driven to his lodgings in Jermyn Street. He entered, and in about five minutes the woman who had been following rang the bell. It was answered by Buttons.

"Does a Mr. Smith live here?" inquired Mrs. Williams.

"He does," was the answer.

"I have been expected to take care of a child for him, one which he was to bring from the country to-day."

"He had one with him when he arrived five minutes ago."

"Thank you. I will call again during

the day, as I have not time to stop now. Good morning."

"Good morning," replied Buttons, as he closed the door.

"A queer fish that! I wonder what she is up to? I will just drop a word to Mr. Smith; he is a jolly nice gentleman—he gave me a sov. t'other day."

Lord Merwyn, who heard the bell, and had been leaning over the banisters, caught some of the conversation, but not all, so he rang for the boy, who at once made his appearance.

"Has anyone been for me this morning? I have been waiting for a person," said the Earl.

"Yes, sir, there was just now a woman inquiring for you."

"What did she say?"

"She said as how you had engaged her to take care of a child," replied the boy.

"Very true; I did hire her; she must • be the one. How did she look?"

The boy then described her appear-

ance and dress, so that Lord Merwyn at once concluded that the woman in question was none other than Mrs. Williams.

"Did she not leave any message?" asked the Earl.

"Yes, sir, she did."

"What was it?"

"She said she did not have time to stay now, but would come again during the day."

"That will do," said Lord Merwyn.

The boy left the room, and the Earl at once commenced pondering over this affair. It appeared plain to him that this woman wished to discover who he really was, for the purpose of extorting money from him.

"It cannot be possible," he murmured to himself, "that she could wish to turn informer, and deliver me into the hands of justice; but stranger things than that have occurred, so I must lose no time in rendering myself secure from all danger. It was very lucky that I had these

apartments, or else Mrs. Williams might have discovered who I really was."

These rooms had been engaged some time before, and as Lord Merwyn had brought no luggage with him, and had paid in advance, he was now enabled to depart without hindrance. Taking the little boy by the hand, he walked forth from the house without making any remark, and bent his steps to St. James' Street, and up that into Piccadilly, where he called a cab, and drove to a house in Camden Town, which he had taken, and in which he had placed a woman for the purpose of taking charge of his son. The Earl reached the place in about three-quarters of an hour; but acting with his usual caution, he left the cab some distance from the house, and walked the rest of the way.

The house which they were about to enter was a small brick one, bright and cheerful-looking, containing a little drawing-room, dining-room, and four bed-rooms, and altogether sufficiently fit for the pur-

pose for which it was to be used.

The woman who was to have charge of the child was about thirty-five years of age, middle-size, well-made, and comely-looking. Her face was kindly in appearance, and her dress neat.

Mrs. Mills—for such was her name—had two children, a girl and a boy, and was a widow, her husband having died some three years since, without having left her any means of support. She was the daughter of a well-to-do farmer, who had died some years before her husband; and the latter had not only spent his own money, but also that which his wife had received from her father. Since she had been left thus destitute, Mrs. Mills had managed to obtain, by her needle alone, a subsistence for herself and children; but to do this she had had to submit to excessive toil, and she had joyfully accepted the terms which Lord Merwyn had offered her for taking charge of his child; for although his lordship had taken care not to offer terms which would attract great attention, they were for her a

competence, and were such as would enable her to put on one side every year a certain sum as a provision for her children.

She was very happy, and her face bore evidences of her contented mind; but had she known by whom she was employed, her honest nature would have shrunk from his blood-stained hands. As it was, however, she awaited his coming with anxiety and great eagerness; and when she heard the front-door bell ring, she sprang from her seat, took a hasty look in the glass, smoothed her hair, and adjusted her dress, then hastened to answer the summons. In a moment the door was thrown open, and Lord Merwyn, holding the little boy by the hand, walked in.

"I am glad to see you, Mr. Jones," said Mrs. Mills; "and this dear little boy is welcome. I am certain that I shall be very fond of him!"

"I hope so, Mrs. Mills."

"Will you not walk into the drawing-room, sir?" said the woman, leading the way towards it.

"I will for a few minutes," replied Mr. Jones.

The Earl had taken this other name for the purpose of breaking any connection between the man who brought the child to this place, and the Mr. Smith who had been staying in Jermyn Street.

They were soon seated in the room; Mrs. Mills fondling on her knee the infant, who looked frightened and sad, and would every now and then ask for his mamma.

"The dear little pet is not happy; he wants his mamma," said the good woman, looking at the child with an air of pity. "I will try and be one to you—won't you get to be fond of me?" she said to him.

"He grieves for his poor mother, who has only been dead for a short time. He will soon forget all about it, and take to you entirely," said Mr. Jones.

"I am sure I hope that he will;" and with this Mrs. Mills kissed the little boy, who seemed to become more friendly to her.

"Mrs. Mills, I have told you what I in-

tended doing about the child and yourself, so that need not again be gone through."

"Yes, sir."

"In regard to the money, you are to have this house as it is, free of rent, and three hundred a year for taking care of the child; that will satisfy you, will it not?"

"Amplly, sir; you are too kind."

"This shall continue until he is thirteen years of age, when he will be sent to some school, but will spend the holidays with you. The allowance of three hundred a-year shall continue until he is twenty-one, at which time you will receive the sum of fifteen hundred pounds for yourself, and the income will be at an end. This, of course, depends upon how you bring up the child, which I do not doubt but what you will do very well."

"I hope that I may be able to please you, sir."

"If you are able to put by anything for yourself or children out of the money, without depriving your charge of any com-

fort or necessary, you have my consent to do so."

"Thank you, sir; I am sure I would never deprive the dear child of a single thing."

"If there should be anything wanting for him out of the ordinary course, you will always receive an additional amount by applying to me. You understand that, do you not, Mrs. Mills?"

"I do, sir; but how shall I find you?"

"I will leave my address, so that you will be able to write to me whenever it may be necessary to do so."

"Thank you, sir, you are too generous!" exclaimed Mrs. Mills, hardly able to repress her feelings of delight at being so trusted.

"Whenever I shall consider it time for him to have a governess, I will let you know. This child must have a good education; I am not rich, but I do not intend him to want any advantage."

"I will try and make him very grateful to you for all your goodness."

"That will do, my good woman," said

Mr. Jones, rising, "I must now bid you good-bye."

"You will come often, will you not, sir?"

"I shall not be able to do so for a long time."

"I am sorry for that, sir."

Mr. Jones kissed the little boy, and bade the woman good-bye, and was soon in the street, wending his way towards the nearest cab-stand. He did not have to walk a long time, but soon found what he wished for, and gave orders to be driven to a place some distance from his real lodgings. As soon as the cab had set him down, he stepped into a deep doorway, and speedily transformed Mr. Jones *alias* Smith into the Earl of Merwyn, by pulling off a false beard, which he had worn as a disguise, and then proceeded to his apartments, congratulating himself that all was going well.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MEETING.

ONE morning, about a week after the New Year had set in, a gentleman arrived at Compton House, and was ushered into the library by the footman.

"How do you do, Morton? I am so glad to see you," said Mr. Wilton.

"I am very well. How have you been?" replied Mr. Morton.

"The same as ever. You must excuse me for not having met you at the train; the fact is, that I have been bothered with such a quantity of letters, that I have had no time for anything. To-day I shall have finished them all; in fact, this one that I am at is the last."

"Don't mention it, my dear fellow. Is your nephew with you?"

"No, he is gone into Leicestershire, to a friend, for some hunting, for which I am sorry, as he would have been pleased to see you."

"I am sorry that he is not here."

"Come, Morton, you must give me an account of your stay in Paris; but first you would, no doubt, like to go to your room, and by the time you have finished dressing I shall have done writing."

Mr. Morton left the library, and returned in about three-quarters of an hour, to find his friend at leisure.

"Sit down, Morton, and tell me what you have been doing with yourself since I saw you last," said Mr. Wilton.

"I have not done anything particularly interesting. To tell you how I spent my time in Paris would only be an old story, which you have, no doubt, heard often before."

"Very true; but did you enjoy yourself?"

"Very well indeed."

"I saw, the other day, that you had been returned to the House. I was very glad to hear it."

"The majority was not large; my opponent has great influence. I did not at one time expect to succeed; my election is owing mostly to my solicitor."

"He must be a valuable man."

"He is, and knows it."

"Sir Henry Hargreave intended standing for this county, but his accession to the earldom of Merwyn has put an end to it."

"I suppose that he still continues attached to Miss Wendell?"

"I have heard some talk about it being a match to please the father, and not the daughter."

"Why should that be?"

"Report says that Margaret Wendell detests the Earl, and only yields to her father's wishes."

"Surely he would not sacrifice the happiness of his only child?" said Mr. Morton.

"You see that the father of the Earl and Mr. Wendell were the greatest friends.

They had always intended that Robert Hargreave, Sir Harold's eldest son, and Margaret should marry. This is one of the causes why Mr. Wendell is so anxious to see the Earl wedded to his daughter."

"The Earl is not the eldest son?"

"I know that, but Mr. Wendell considers that as he is dead, and Henry is now the only living representative of Sir Harold, that it will be the same thing."

"Did you ever see this Robert?" said Mr. Morton.

"Oh! yes, very often, when he was a little fellow, I used to like him much better than I did Henry. It is a great pity that he should have done as he did."

"What was that?" inquired Mr. Morton.

"As soon as his father died he went to Australia, and there fell a victim to some disease."

"How very sad for his mother."

"Many people said that she was glad, on account of Henry, who was her favourite."

"That would be impossible for any

mother—she would be worse than a brute to have such feelings.”

“She seems a most pleasant person to talk to.”

“Yes, she does.”

“The Earl is a lucky fellow, thus to get such a splendid woman for his wife, with such a large fortune.”

“Very fortunate,” said Mr. Morton, abstractedly.

“One does not often make so good a stroke.”

“When is the marriage to come off?” said Morton, rousing himself from his half day-dream.

“After the London season.”

“And where?”

“At St. George’s, Hanover Square.”

“And Miss Wendell herself, is she eager to become the Countess of Merwyn?”

“There are some who believe that Miss Wendell’s dislike to the Earl is caused by her preferring some one else.”

“Who is that?” asked Mr. Morton, quickly.

"A certain friend of mine."

"Come, tell me the name?"

"Mr. Morton."

"Nonsense, Wilton—you are jesting!"

"Not at all, I merely repeat what Madame Rumour has said."

"People have queer notions."

"We must call in a few days on the Wendells and Hargreaves. I have not been there for some time—I was waiting for you to accompany me."

"I should only be too happy."

The next day and the one following were spent in shooting, and other amusements; and on the third Mr. Morton went with his friend to call on Mr. Wendell and his daughter. As they drove up to the house, Mr. Morton descried Margaret in the distance, with the governess, and called Mr. Wilton's attention to them.

"I think we had better join them," said Mr. Wilton, "instead of going into the house; they will turn back with us. What do you say to that?"

"It would be pleasanter."

So they left the carriage, and walked in the direction of Miss Wendell, who saw with joy the well-remembered face of Mr. Morton. She could scarcely conceal her emotion, so great was it.

"Good morning, Miss Wendell; it is some time since I have seen you. I have brought back Mr. Morton," said Mr. Wilton. "How do you do, Mademoiselle?" he continued.

"You are indeed a stranger," replied Margaret.

"We saw you coming towards the house, and thought we would join you," said Mr. Morton.

"We were about ending our walk. It has been such a beautiful day for walking!" said Margaret.

"There is no day so pleasant as a fine winter's one for out-door exercise," replied Mr. Morton.

By this time Mr. Wilton, who was not blind to the wishes of his companion, was talking to Mademoiselle, and walking some little distance behind Margaret and Mr. Morton.

"Miss Wendell, you will pardon me, but is it true that you are about to marry the Earl of Merwyn?"

"I am engaged to him," was the reply.

"I hope that I do not offend you, Miss Wendell, by asking this question?"

"Not at all," she said, sadly.

"Miss Wendell, had not that been the case, I should have said something to you; but now it is too late, as you have chosen Lord Merwyn to become your happy husband."

"Happiness, Mr. Morton, does not flow from every wedding."

"Do you mean that you will not be happy with the man of your choice?"

Miss Wendell remained silent.

"You do not love him? Oh! pardon me for asking such a question, but did you know the interest I take in the answer, you would not blame me!"

"I should blame myself, not you!"

"Miss Wendell, I cannot!—I ought not!—but I must! I will tell you of the love which I feel towards you!"

"Pity me! I am the promised wife of Lord Merwyn; I may not listen to you."

"One moment."

"No, no. See, we are at the house."

"I have something of the greatest importance to tell you—it is not of my love, but of a matter of the greatest moment to you."

"I fear there is not time, unless it be before others."

"No one but you can hear it—no other ear must listen to it. But meet me at the grove, where we lunched the day of the shooting-party. Will you consent?"

"I will," replied Margaret, after some hesitation; "at what time shall it be?"

"Say twelve o'clock. May I expect you?"

"Yes."

They then entered the house, followed by Mademoiselle and Mr. Wilton. They did not have to wait long in the drawing-room before they were joined by Mr. Wendell, who was not very much pleased

at the presence of Mr. Morton; however, the manners of the lord of Wendell Hall would not allow him to manifest any uncourteousness to a visitor.

The call was soon over, and our friends returned to Compton House, leaving Margaret to soliloquise over the occurrences of the day; but before entering into them, we will give the conversation which took place between Mr. Wendell and his daughter.

"Margaret, you must not give Mr. Morton the slightest encouragement, should he make any advances to you."

"He will not, papa, now that he knows of my engagement to Lord Merwyn," replied Margaret.

"Men do not stop at that, so you must be on your guard, and give him no opportunity."

"Yes, papa."

"He will receive no encouragement from me to frequent the house."

"You would not wish me to be rude to him, would you?"

"No, I do not mean that. I only wish you to show that you feel no interest in him—do you understand?"

"I do."

Mr. Wendell then returned to the library.

"Would that he had come sooner, before I was compelled to accept the hand of another; there might then have been some chance; but now, alas! there is no hope—all is settled and arranged. Misery alone is to be my future lot. I can never learn to love Lord Merwyn; it would be impossible for me ever to do that. What can Mr. Morton have to tell me? He says that it is not of love. It is very strange that he should have any secret to impart to me; it may be merely a ruse to induce me to keep the appointment. There is a feeling within me which urges me to go to this rendezvous; and, still, ought I to meet one whom my father has requested, nay, commanded me to avoid, and even to treat with coolness? Why am I thus placed between duty and inclination? I hardly know what I ought to do,

or even what I wish. I will go for a short time, give him an opportunity of explaining himself, and then return home. Having taken this resolution, she became calmer and more composed than she had been since the departure of Mr. Morton.

CHAPTER V.

THE SECRET.

THE next morning, at about half-past eleven o'clock, Margaret left the house by herself, having induced Mademoiselle by some means to remain at home. She quickly disappeared down the long avenue of trees, and soon diverged towards the lake, by the side of which she walked until she gained the appointed place. Her heart beat high with expectation, as she entered the grove, fearing, yet hoping, to meet the man she really loved. Mr. Morton had not yet arrived, so Margaret was obliged to wait for about ten minutes; these seemed as hours, so wearisomely did they draw themselves out, lingering as if

to torture the anxious mind. At length footsteps were heard, and in another moment Mr. Morton was at the side of Margaret.

"I hope I have not kept you waiting?"

"I was there before the time," said Margaret.

"I should have been here sooner myself, but I did not wish anyone to see me."

"I fear, Mr. Morton, that I ought not to have met you thus clandestinely."

"I will not detain you a moment."

"You said that there was something of importance which you wished to tell me."

"I did, and will do so at once; but before I go further will you permit me to ask one question?"

"You may do so."

"Miss Wendell, would there be any hope for me if you were not engaged to the Earl of Merwyn?"

"It is a strange question."

"Do not refuse to answer; the result will be of great importance to me."

"I am a pledged wife; I must not answer."

"I am not satisfied."

"Why should you not be content with that answer? Our paths through life are far apart henceforth."

"I am not so certain of that."

"You forget to whom you speak, Mr. Morton," said Margaret, forcing a frown.

"Pardon me, I pray, and listen to that which I am here to tell."

"I am listening."

Mr. Morton's story, whatever it was, caused her to turn first very pale, and then red. By the time that Mr. Morton had finished, Margaret appeared much more contented and happy than she had done for months.

"At last, then, you tell me that you love me, dearest Margaret."

"When have I not been telling it you?"

"And I have thought of you night

and day; never have you been out of my mind from the moment that I first saw you."

"We must both have fallen victims at the same time," said Margaret, blushing and laughing.

"Your father is not inclined to be very friendly to me, so I think that it would be the wisest plan for me not to call again, but to meet you in this, or some other place, whenever you are able to come."

"I must obey you now."

"Will you come to-morrow, dearest?"

"If I can I will."

"You must not fail."

"You will grow tired if you see me so often," said Margaret.

"Grow tired of you, love?—never!"

"Lord Merwyn suspects already that I care too much for you."

"We will give him no cause for suspicion; we will only meet as we have to-day."

"But he may discover these interviews."

• “When does he return?”

“In about a week.”

“We shall have plenty of time, as there is no one else to watch you.”

“Papa is too much occupied with his books ever to think of looking after me.”

“That is very fortunate.”

“All that you have told me is true?”

“It is—you may depend upon it.”

“As you very much wish it, I will meet you here to-morrow at the same time; but I must now return, or else our meeting may be discovered and brought to an end.”

“Good-bye, dearest Margaret.”

“Good-bye.”

“You will be certain of being here to-morrow?” said Mr. Morton, reluctantly allowing the fair hand to be withdrawn from his own.

“I will not fail,” was the answer.

They then separated until the morrow, when they again met in the grove at the same hour. Margaret knew that she was

not doing right, in thus meeting a man without her father's knowledge, especially when he had forbidden her to do so; but she could not repress the desires of her heart—she could not deny herself the pleasure of commingling her spirit with that of the object of her maiden love. Long and sweet were these interviews, where love held full sway, and two hearts were happy in their contiguity.

Margaret, for the first time in her life, felt the bliss of loving, and being loved in return, and was happy beyond all description. The joyousness of either heart filled the other with never-ending pleasure. Soft words of love fell on the willing ear of Margaret, soothing her spirit with their sweetness; she drank deep at the well of earthly bliss. Mr. Morton also felt that he had something now to live for, when he could call Margaret his own.

At length the Earl of Merwyn returned from town, and hastened to pay his devoirs to the woman whom he was soon to wed. With what sad courtesy those attentions

were received by Margaret we need not say, but nothing could exceed the delight of the father as he welcomed his future son-in-law.

"My dear Henry, I am very glad to see you back again. How did you like your visit to town?"

"The death of my kinsman threw a cloud over my journey. It is sad to lose a relation, no matter how little one has seen of him," replied the Earl.

"Very true; death is a terrible calamity, which we are all liable to have come upon us at any moment. By-the-by," continued Mr. Wendell, "Mr. Morton called the other day, about a week ago."

"Really!" said the Earl, looking annoyed.

Mr. Wendell saw this, and said,

"You need not mind on Margaret's account, as she has, I have good reason to believe, given up all thoughts of this man."

"I am glad to hear it," said the Earl; but he left the room, taking with him a different opinion to that held by Mr. Wen-

dell, for he saw at a glance the cause of Margaret's improvement in health and spirits, and resolved to be on his guard, watching her with the utmost strictness, and not allowing a single action of hers to escape his notice, if he could prevent it.

On reaching the drawing-room, Lord Merwyn found Margaret seated in an arm-chair by the fire; and as he took her hand, which was held out to him, he also attempted to snatch a kiss from the rosy lips, but was repulsed.

"You are cruel, Margaret."

"I have already frankly told you of the state of my feelings towards you."

"Will you never change?"

"Never."

"You give a cold welcome to your affianced husband."

"Would you have me deceive you by hypocrisy?"

"I would prefer it to your icy manner and cruel reserve."

"Unfortunately, I am not able to please you."

“Why not?”

“Simply because I never make use of dissimulation.”

“Your haughty pride may have a fall at some time,” said he, fiercely.

“Do you threaten to use your power when I am your wife?”

“I shall most assuredly insist upon your treating me in a different manner.”

“It is no more than I should expect; a man who will force a woman into a marriage against her will is capable of anything, when he has once gained the entire control of her.”

The Earl of Merwyn had not lost all sense of gentlemanly feeling, and, therefore, changing his tone, he said,

“Margaret, do not speak thus—do not thus strive to break my heart with such unkindness. If you will only permit me, I will be your devoted slave, love shall be a word too faint and weak to convey the idea of my devotion to you, my life shall be devoted to your happiness, your pleasure shall be my whole study; no-

thing which I can do shall be left undone. Oh! let me, I pray, be a fond lover, who looks forward to the time that will give to him an angel, with the most intense longing?"

The Earl finished this impassioned speech with a glance so full of sadness and grief, that Margaret was almost inclined to soften towards him.

"You must not delude yourself, my lord, by imagining for a moment that I can ever have the least love for you."

"Is there no hope, then?"

"Not any."

"There must be, or it will be worse than death."

"Then why do you wish to hold me to this marriage, which can only result in misery to both?"

"I cannot yield you up."

"You say that you suffer?"

"Words cannot express how much."

"Why do you not then have some pity for others?"

"I do."

"You have a strange way of showing it."

"I see that there is no use in arguing with you—entreaties are useless."

"I am glad that you think so."

"You are looking much better than when I left," said Lord Merwyn.

"I am very well."

"What has occurred to make you so much more contented and happy?"

"I am sure I cannot tell."

"Some pleasant news?" said the Earl, as he saw that Margaret blushed perceptibly.

"You seem to be a very careful observer."

"I am. I should have said that you must have seen recently some dear friend, judging from your appearance."

"Appearances are often deceptive—you should not trust to them."

"Then you have seen no one lately in whom you take an interest?"

Margaret saw at what the Earl was aiming, and being thus driven to bay, as

it were, said with a proud, indignant air,

“Mr. Morton called on us the other day.”

“Oh! that accounts for your improvement in spirits.”

“You are welcome to your own opinion.”

“Have you seen him since?”

“He only called once.”

“You could have seen him without his coming to the Hall.”

“I do not understand you.”

“To speak in plain terms, then, have you not met this man since he called?”

“My lord, you forget to whom you speak. I am not used to such treatment, and I will not endure it longer; good morning,” continued Margaret, as she arose to leave the room.

The Earl was unprepared for such a scene, and hesitated as to what course he ought to pursue.

“Your conduct plainly says that you have seen and spoken to Mr. Morton.”

Margaret made no answer, but continued

her course towards the door, when the Earl at a venture said,

“You were seen to meet a man yesterday.”

The shaft struck home. Margaret stopped, turned as pale as death, and said,

“You abuse your privilege as a visitor to this house, and you would confer a favour on me if you would discontinue your visits, until a certain fearful event makes it necessary for you again to present yourself.”

“I regret that I cannot consult your desires in this matter; the duty which I owe to myself prevents me from so doing.”

“Good morning, my lord,” said Margaret, as she left the room.

“I will break her pride,” said the Earl to himself; “it is too dreadful to be the object of her scorn and contempt—for I cannot deny to myself that such I am. May curses rest on the man who has crossed my path! Let her once become my wife, and then if he dares to thrust

himself between her and me, blood alone will wash away the affront."

Notwithstanding the request made by Margaret, that he would remain away from Wendell Hall, he still continued to visit there frequently. Time rolled on, and the month of April had nearly run its race, when Margaret was expected by her aunt, Lady Courtland, who had just arrived in town for the season. Mr. Wendell was to accompany his daughter to London, and remain there for some time. This he had promised much against his will, as he was averse to mingling with the world to any great extent. Margaret was pleased at the idea of going, as, although her visit to London might not do away with the frequent visits of Lord Merwyn, she would there, at least, not be obliged to see him so often alone, since she would have the constant society of Lady Frances, whom she had learned to be very fond of. We fear we must admit, also, that although affianced to another, Margaret could not refrain from reflecting with

pleasure that in London she would have many opportunities of meeting Mr. Morton, who was a star in the London firmament, being, as he was, unmarried, and possessed of so large a property.

Thus did Margaret's thoughts run, while she awaited with anxiety, but not without anticipations of pleasure, for the time which was to bring her into the London world.


The Earl of Merwyn was not at all sorry to leave the dull country life for the gaieties of the season; but his longing for these pleasures was quite merged in the eagerness with which he looked forward to the time which would bring them to a close, and make Margaret his own for ever. The death of Florence had already become, with him, a thing of the past; he felt secure from detection, and had contrived to defy remorse.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SEASON.

WE must now visit the aristocratic region known as Grosvenor Square; and as we do so, we see many splendid equipages dashing by, standing still, or drawing up before some house, for the purpose of depositing its burden of human beings. Entering the door of a large palatial mansion, we find ourselves in a fine hall, in which there are a porter, seated in his chair, and three footmen lounging about. Eluding the watchfulness of these splendid creatures, we ascend the staircase, and opening a door, step into the drawing-room, furnished on a scale of magnificence, in which taste and refinement are mingled to prevent any gaudiness.

In this splendid saloon, which was some forty feet long, and about thirty wide, were two beautifully carved white mantel-pieces, over which were placed two enormous mirrors, reaching to the ceiling; and also the busts of Tasso, Dante, Plutarch, and Virgil in white marble. From the ceiling were suspended two magnificent bronze and ormolu chandeliers, containing twenty-four candles each, and there were also four brackets of the same description, having each six lights. The carpet was the famous Axminster, woven in a single piece. The furniture was of rose-wood, covered with satin damask of maroon and gold; and between each of the four windows looking into the street, stood a long pier-glass, supported by a gilded base. There was also a cabinet of ebony, inlaid with brass; and standing on the marble slab which surmounted this splendid piece of workmanship, were a clock and pair of candelabras in ormolu, and the finest painting on china. On the opposite side of the room stood another



cabinet of the same kind, only that this one was inlaid with silver, instead of brass, and supported a beautiful silver vase containing wax flowers. In the centre of the room was a table of ebony and ormolu, covered with the choicest books. Behind this saloon was the back drawing-room, furnished in the same sumptuous manner.

Seated in this room were two ladies and two gentlemen. The ladies were Lady Frances Atherly and Margaret Wendell. The gentlemen were Lord Merwyn and Lord Renford.

Lady Frances was, as ever, full of life and gaiety, for nothing could repress her overflowing spirits.

"Are you going to the ball to-night?" said Lord Renford.

"At Lady Caroline Wentworth's you mean, do you not?" replied Lady Frances.

"I do," rejoined Lord Renford.

"Most assuredly I shall go. Did you ever hear of my missing a ball when it was possible to go?" cried Lady Frances.

"You will go, will you not, Margaret?" said the Earl.

"Yes; Frances would not let me stay away, even if I wished," answered Margaret.

"Have you seen the Viscountess Vinton since you have been in town this season?" said Lady Frances, addressing the Earl.

"I have not," was the reply.

"Mamma has taken such an absurd dislike to her, for what reason I cannot tell; for my part I like her very much, and she is so very beautiful," rejoined Lady Frances.

"She is one of the most lovely women that I have ever seen," said Lord Merwyn.

"Do you hear that, Margaret? If I were you, I would not allow him to think anyone as pretty as myself."

"It would be cruel to compel anyone to think me more beautiful than another," replied Margaret.

"It would not be necessary to use any

force to induce me to prefer the sun to the moon," said Lord Merwyn.

"You said that Lady Vinton was by no means pretty last year," rejoined Margaret. "You seem to have changed your opinion," she continued.

And O reader! you see that even the heart-stricken Margaret could not refrain from flirting!

"I said that merely to please the Countess of Courtland, who was determined that Lady Vinton should not be admired."

"I cannot imagine why mamma should mind people praising the Viscountess. Sometimes I think that it is jealousy of her beauty; but that would be very silly for a woman of mamma's age," said Lady Frances.

"That could not possibly be the cause," said Lord Merwyn.

"We must not be so unkind to Lady Courtland; most women are the same," said Lord Renford.

"That I will not allow," said Lady

Frances. "Come, Lord Merwyn, you must support me in overthrowing this calumniator of the sex. The duty of woman is to crush anyone who holds such an opinion," she continued, addressing Lord Renford.

"I pray you to have mercy! you will not desert me, Miss Wendell? I should be an easy prey if attacked by all of you," said his lordship.

"I can lend no assistance to a rebel," said Margaret, striving, sadly, to be merry.

"Then I must yield, and humbly sue for pardon," rejoined Lord Renford.

"It is granted, on condition that you never repeat the offence."

Lady Frances at the same time threw a most bewitching glance upon the culprit, which caused his heart to beat tumultuously. The eyes met, the hearts became moulded into one; from that day both loved.

"I was at the Club this morning, and saw Mr. Morton. You remember him, don't you, Miss Wendell?" said Lord Renford,

striving to conceal the sweet trouble of his heart.

"Very well, he was at the ball ; one is not likely to forget a face one has seen at a country ball," said Miss Wendell, striving, on her part, to conceal the pain which raged within her breast.

"We meet so few people in the country, that every new face leaves an impression behind which is not easily obliterated by time," said Lord Merwyn, rather pointedly.

This was not noticed by anyone but Margaret, at whom it was aimed, and she made no answer, but treated his rudeness with the contempt it so richly deserved.

"I was told last night that the young Marquis of Ashtown was to be married very soon," said the Earl.

"Whom to?"

"The daughter of a rich merchant in the City."

"You do not mean that?" said Lady Frances.

"I do."

"Why does he marry so much beneath him?"

"The girl is immensely rich," answered the Earl.

"But I thought that he had an enormous income?" said Lady Frances.

"I have been told that he has run through the greater part of his property," rejoined the Earl.

"How horrid!"

"She is very pretty," said Lord Renford.

"That is the way with so many men—they squander all their fortune, and then wed some City heiress," said Margaret.

"The Marquis brings blood, and the lady money; they are both satisfied with their bargain, so we have no reason to complain," rejoined Lord Renford.

"Very true, but one is always sorry to see anybody throw themselves away by their own foolish conduct," answered Margaret, resolved not to be abashed by what she regarded as an allusion to Mr. Morton.

"What sort of a looking person is Lord Ashtown?" asked Lady Frances.

"You will see him at the ball this evening, and can then judge for yourself much better than I can tell you," said Lord Renford; and then, turning to Margaret, he continued: "Have you been to the Opera since coming to town, Miss Wendell?"

"No, I have not yet, but I expect to go very soon."

"We are to go to-morrow night, to hear Piccolomini," said Lady Frances.

"She is truly a most charming little creature, and takes one by storm," said the Earl.

"I never listened to a more fascinating singer in my life," said Lord Renford.

"All the men are in love with her, are they not?" asked Margaret.

"Not all," replied Lord Renford, glancing at Lady Frances; "but the fellows at the Club rave about her, and she is the toast at every bachelor dinner."

"Men are so silly," said Lady Frances.

"Why do you think so?" said the Earl.

"Because they always run after every new face that is at all pretty. I am certain that they would rave about a girl on the stage, when they would not notice her if she was in private life. But men are queer creatures," added Lady Frances.

"However that may be, you will think Piccolomini most charming when you have once seen her," replied Lord Renford.

"Come, Renford, we must be going," said the Earl, rising from his seat.

The gentlemen bid the ladies good morning, saying that they should expect to see them at Lady Caroline's in the evening.

No sooner had they disappeared, than Lady Frances said to Margaret,

"Do you not think Lord Renford a nice fellow? I like him very much; he is very amusing!"

"I like him exceedingly."

"But you do not seem particularly pleased with your affianced; you prefer some one else, do you not?"

"Why should you think so, Frances?"

"I have my reasons ; come, dear cousin, tell me."

"I have nothing to say."

"Not of Mr. Morton, dear coz?"

"Why of him?"

"There is no use in trying to hide it from me. I have known who possessed your heart for a long time."

"There is such a thing as a mirage, Frances."

"That is all very well, but I am certain that the name of the man you love is Morton. Nay, you need not look down and blush ; there is nothing in it that any woman need be ashamed of."

"You have guessed the truth ; I do love Mr. Morton."

"Tell me, does he love you in return?"

"He has implied that he did, and I believed him ; but oh ! what does it matter when my hand is promised to another?"

"If I loved a man, and he loved me, no power of parents should intervene to make my future lot one of unhappiness."

"What do you mean, Frances?" inquired Margaret.

"Mean! why, I would marry, in spite of my father!"

"Oh! Frances, you ought not to speak so."

"Why not?" said Frances, becoming excited with her argument. "I do not see why a girl should be made miserable and broken-hearted for the purpose of obeying a cruel and unrelenting father, who must be all selfishness ever to dream of blasting the joy of his daughter's life."

"There is some truth in that," thought Margaret to herself; but aloud she replied, "It seems very hard to disobey one's father."

"It is not required that any child should yield up its hopes and happiness to gratify the whim or selfish desire of a proud old man; for my part, I would never submit. If I were Margaret Wendell, I would marry Mr. Morton if he would have me; and if he would not, I would die before I would wed Lord Merwyn."

"I have not the courage to do it; for if I did, papa would never forgive me."

"The forgiveness of a parent who would ruin one's life is not necessary for one's enjoyment," said Frances.

"You are instructing me to become a rebel; I fear I should make but a poor one."

"Tom knows Mr. Morton very well, and says that he is the nicest man of his acquaintance."

"Does he really?"

"Yes, indeed; and for my own gratification I hope that we shall see your lover to-night," said Frances, laughing.

Margaret blushed deeply at the thought, and her heart went pit-a-pat against her fair bosom, which heaved tumultuously at the anticipation.

At this moment the door opened, and Lady Courtland entered the room.

"So they are gone," said the Countess, as she glanced about for the gentlemen who had so lately graced the room with their presence.

"They have been gone about ten minutes," replied Lady Frances.

"Will they be at the ball this evening?" inquired her ladyship.

"They said that they intended to go," said Margaret.

"I wish that I had come in sooner, as I intended to see your intended husband," rejoined the Countess, addressing Margaret.

"Has papa come in yet?" said Margaret, wishing to turn the conversation.

"No, he does not return until late in the afternoon."

"Where has he gone?"

"He went to his lawyer's."

"Mamma," said Frances, "are you going out shopping, as I wish to make some purchases?"

"The carriage is at the door now, so you and Margaret had better get ready at once," replied the Countess, leaving the room.

"I am so glad mamma has given up taking Catherine out to shop with her ;

you cannot imagine how naughty she used to be."

"Ah! Frances, you would not speak so, if you felt as bitterly as I do the want of a sister."

The two young girls then went to prepare themselves for shopping, and were soon ready to accompany the Countess.

CHAPTER VII.

AT LADY CAROLINE WENTWORTH'S.

AT ten o'clock on the evening of that day, there were numbers of magnificent carriages dashing up to a splendid mansion in Grosvenor Square, and depositing their aristocratic inmates at its door, then driving away to allow others to follow. This superb house was owned by a Mr. Wentworth, M.P. He was a man possessing an enormous fortune, and was of a good old county family, who had married the daughter of the Earl of Melville, a woman of fashion, and at this time looked upon as one of the most potent of the leaders of the *beau-monde*. Although not beautiful, she possessed a face full of expression and intelligence,

and, without having regular features, she had been the object of much admiration in her younger days, and even now came in for a goodly share of homage. She was a little above the middle height, plump, and well-made, with a soft and rounded figure, dark hair, and brown hazel eyes, a small mouth, and rather peculiar-shaped nose.

Amongst her guests on the evening on which we introduce her to our readers, were the Earl of Merwyn, Lord Renford, the Earl of Courtland, Mr. Wendell, and Mr. Morton. The Countess of Courtland, her two daughters, Lady Frances and Lady Bertha, with their cousin Margaret, were also there. Mr. Morton, as soon as he saw Margaret, advanced to greet her, and also paid his respects to her aunt and Lady Frances.

The Countess, who had discovered that Mr. Morton was a man of great wealth, and holding a good position, was far more courteous to him than she had been at Wendell Hall; for she hoped that, as

the marriage between Margaret and Lord Merwyn was decided upon, Mr. Morton might take a fancy to Lady Bertha.

Our friend, who had learned the character and disposition of the Countess, resolved to propitiate her as well as he could; and acting on this resolution, he said,

"May I have the honour of your hand for the quadrille which is about to begin?"

"With pleasure," answered Lady Courtland.

Mr. Morton led her to a place, and they were soon in the dance.

"My son Tom tells me that you are a great friend of his."

"Yes, I am; I like him exceedingly," replied Mr. Morton.

"Come, we must not let our conversation make us forget our figures."

With this the conversation was stopped for the present. The quadrille was soon over, and our friend conducted Lady Courtland back to her place, and soli-

cited the pleasure of the hand of Lady Frances for the polka, and his request was willingly complied with.

In some half-hour after this, Mr. Morton had the great felicity of waltzing with Margaret; and as they returned to her aunt they exchanged a few words of love and joy; their hearts were full of tenderness, and Margaret enjoyed the few minutes she passed by the side of Mr. Morton much more than all the rest of the evening; the most unpleasant portion of which was that which she was forced from duty to grant to her future husband.

The soft words and blandishments of the Earl fell upon her unwilling ear like a death-knell to all the newborn hopes of young love, and it was with difficulty that she could consent to be his partner so often.

The Viscount Atherly, whom we have described in one of our chapters in the first volume, was at this ball, paying very marked attention to the only daugh-

ter of Mr. Wentworth, who was looked upon as an heiress, insomuch as she would receive all the money settled on the younger children, as she had only one brother and no sisters—eighty thousand pounds, which would be most acceptable to the Courtland estate, as it was heavily mortgaged.

Harriet Wentworth was also a girl possessing other attractions than the fortune she was to have; she was tall, stately, and passed as a beauty, for though she bore a great resemblance to her mother, and like her did not have regular features, there was in her general appearance just that improvement on the original which made her altogether a woman of no mean charms. She received the advances of the Viscount Atherly with pleasure, for she not only had already a liking for him, which she felt was reciprocated by the young guardsman, but also knew that the parents on both sides were most anxious to have the young people agree.

The Courtlands looked with an eager eye upon the money, whilst the Wentworths, although they knew that the Atherlys were not an old family, saw that they were on the point of gaining one of the best connections in the United Kingdom, by the marriage of Miss Wendell to the Earl of Merwyn. Thus both sides had their reasons for the match; and if the young hearts wished for the same results as the old heads were desirous of seeing brought about, there would be no reason why the course of true love should not run smoothly, which unfortunately it does not always do, as for example in the case of Margaret and Mr. Morton. The course of their love lies, indeed, at present through dangerous channels; breakers lie ahead, and unseen rocks are concealed by the treacherous water which rolls placidly over the hidden danger. The bubbles of Hope rise, indeed, at times to the surface, gilded with every sunny hue, but burst as soon as seen, scattering their airy fragments again into

the stream, which rushes on and sweeps them along in its tumultuous race.

Our attention is now attracted by the sight of two young people, who have just finished waltzing, and are returning to the Countess of Courtland—Lady Frances and Lord Renford, the latter of whom looks very much affected by the presence of the fair maid leaning on his arm. They are soon seated by the side of Lady Courtland, who rises for the purpose of going to some friend for a moment, thus affording an opportunity not to be lost, which Lord Renford does not fail to take advantage of.

“My dear Lady Frances, I love you devotedly.” Here he paused for a moment, fearing to say more; but taking courage, he continued, “will you be my wife?”

“You take me by surprise,” replied Lady Frances, blushing, and hesitating what to say.

This declaration, however, was not unexpected, and was received with the greatest satisfaction.

"You will not refuse me?—it would be terrible!" said Lord Renford, in a supplicating voice.

"What shall I say?" said the fair one, turning her blue eyes full upon her lover, who saw in them hope for his heart's dearest wish.

"Say one little word, and let that be yes."

A low, soft voice gently said "Yes," and they were happy.

Lady Courtland returned at this moment, and thought by the looks of the lovers that some tender conversation had been exchanged between them, and as soon as the lover withdrew, she said,

"Frances, dear, you look as if something more than ordinary had occurred this evening—what did Lord Renford talk about?"

"He asked me to marry him."

"And you said yes?"

"I did."

"That was right, my child; he is a man of good position, large fortune, and

of an old family; your papa will be delighted to hear of this."

"I am glad you are pleased."

"Margaret is very foolish to have such a dislike to the Earl—she ought to overcome the feeling."

"I am very sorry indeed for her, poor girl; she will never be happy with her destined husband. I wish that you would speak to Uncle Frank about it."—Happy love softens the heart to all the world.

"Is she as miserable as you say?"

"More, much more. She perfectly detests the man she is to wed."

"It is too late now, as your uncle has gone too far to recede."

"He ought to have known whether or not Margaret cared for Lord Merwyn before the engagement was made."

"It is very grateful to me to have you engaged to a man of your choice. I could never force a child of mine to wed against her wish," replied Lady Courtland, with a sublime expression of countenance.

Lady Frances knew very well, nevertheless, that had she felt inclined to refuse the offer just made, her mother would have been the first to have insisted on her accepting so good a proposal. She was too happy, however, to enter upon a disagreeable subject, and so she said,

"Tom seems to be very contented with Miss Wentworth for a partner; I wonder if he cares for her at all?"

"I think he likes her very well; I wish that they would make a match, as she has a large fortune—some eighty thousand pounds, I hear."

"As much as that?"

"There is no doubt of it."

"Margaret has an enormous amount of money; why, Lord Merwyn will be the richest man in England when Wendell Hall is added to his estates."

"He seems to be under the special care of Fortune, coming, as he has, so unexpectedly into the Merwyn title and estates; and now to be on the point of marrying a girl with so large a fortune,

who is considered by everybody to be very beautiful."

"I think her most lovely," said Lady Frances.

Margaret and Mr. Morton are now dancing a quadrille, which is considered dull by most young people, but our readers cannot be so blind as not to see that they chose it for the purpose of having an opportunity of conversing, which a valse or a polka would not so well afford them.

"Margaret, dearest, I am very happy to be even permitted to converse with you for these few short moments," said Mr. Morton.

"You are easily contented," she replied with a quiet smile.

"Does your aunt suspect us?"

"No, not at all."

"I am surprised at that, for I know that a little while since she was horrified if I even approached you."

"She thinks that I have made up my mind to forget you, and now would not

object to you for a son-in-law—at least, I think so.”

“That is very good, for it will enable us to meet much oftener than we could otherwise have done. Fortune seems to favour us.”

“To favour you, you mean, sir, for both my cousins are very pretty.”

“You need not fear that anyone will ever make me forget you, my darling!”

“Well, to tell the truth, I am not very fearful; I am too proud to think that anyone could steal away my lover.”

“Dearest, your words are sweeter than music’s sweetest sounds, when they fall softly in harmonious strains upon the listening ear!”

“You flatter me.”

“Flatter you, my loved one! My tongue obeys my heart, and the heart never flatters.”

“I suppose I must believe you, then.”

Here they were obliged to go through one of the figures of the dance.

Returning to their places, Mr. Morton said,

"There is your cousin, Lord Atherly, paying devoted attention to Miss Wentworth, who does not appear at all loth to receive his apparently soft words."

"Do you think that she is pretty?"

"I admire her very much."

"She is certainly a very attractive girl; I like her looks."

"Lord Atherly is also fine-looking, a good specimen of a young Englishman."

"He is very nice. You know him, do you not?"

"Very well indeed."

They were here again interrupted by the necessity of attending to the dance. The ball continued until about half-past one o'clock, when the company began to take their leave of the mistress of the mansion. Lady Courtland, her two daughters, and Margaret being among the first to retire from the scene of gaiety. And here, in justice to Margaret, we must mention that in the course of the evening Mr. Morton had made certain revelations to her which, whilst they astonished her beyond measure,

convinced her that her betrothal to Lord Merwyn was null and void; and that her father, when he knew all, would not object to her loving Mr. Morton.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ARREST.

THE next morning Lord Merwyn was seated in the library of his house in Portman Square, with the *Times* in his hand, and his lordship had nearly finished reading the paper, when his eye accidentally caught sight of an account of a murder, which an irresistible impulse led him to read. The murderer's name was Thomas Williams, and the outrage had been committed on his wife in a fit of drunken rage, which, said the newspaper report, seemed to have been occasioned by his wife's failure to discover the true name and position of a gentleman who had employed them to commit some crime. The criminal would not

confess any more, but it will be necessary, for the purposes of our story, that we should explain the circumstances of the crime referred to.

This Thomas Williams, whom we have already met, had desired his wife to follow Mr. Smith, also an old acquaintance of ours, to his house, and endeavour to discover, if possible, who he was, as they did not believe him to be the man he wished to pass himself off for. Mrs. Williams, as we have seen in one of our foregoing chapters, did, accordingly, ascertain the lodgings of Mr. Smith, and intended to return in about half an hour to keep watch and ward over the place until he should come out, so that she might be able to find out to her satisfaction the true name and position of her employer. Returning to Jermyn Street in about half an hour, she waited near the house for some three hours in vain, when she determined again to ask the boy, as she feared that Mr. Smith might have gone out before she had returned. Acting on this resolution, she demanded once more

news of the lodger from Buttons, and was informed that he had departed for good some ten minutes after she had been there the first time.

Mrs. Williams at first thought that the boy was attempting to deceive her, but was at length compelled to admit to her mind the unwelcome truth that, for the present, all clue to Mr. Smith's residence was lost, and was filled with fear of her husband's anger, as well she might be, for he was not a man to be trifled with. On her return home she related the whole circumstances of the case, and received curses from her infuriated husband. The affair, however, seemed on the point of being forgotten by them, when, unfortunately for Mrs. Williams, her husband returned home late one night (or rather early one morning) as drunk as a lord. During a state of this kind his fury, when once aroused, knew no bounds; and when, in the course of a conversation between the worthy pair, not of the most cordial nature, Tom referred to the affair of Mr. Smith, and reproached her in drun-

ken exclamations for losing so good a chance of wringing money from a gentleman, she replied by recriminations. The dispute became louder and louder, until at last they came to blows; and this state of things did not last long before Tom seized the poker and brained his wife on the spot. The noise aroused the neighbours, who, coming to the assistance of the murdered woman, found it no easy matter to arrest the wretched man.

On coming to his senses, Tom found himself the occupant of a prison, charged with the murder of his wife, which seemed like a horrible dream. Being brought before the magistrate, he confessed his guilt, but pleaded his almost maddened condition at the time of the tragedy, and went on to confess the cause of the quarrel between himself and Mrs. Williams, but would not disclose the nature of the relation existing between himself and employer. Tom had been remanded to await his trial.

When the Earl of Merwyn had finished the elaborate account of the murder, he

could hardly breathe, so great was his terror and apprehension; for it seemed to his excited imagination as if the powers of the police were about to be exerted to their utmost to drag him to justice. His hand trembled, his brain seemed on fire, everything seemed to shape itself to his destruction; his blood at times would course through his veins like molten lead, and then again he would become cold, and almost lifeless.

By degrees he became more calm, and began to look on the matter in all its bearings. The first question he asked himself was, if this man would confess his guilt or carry his secret to the grave. It was hardly possible, thought Lord Merwyn, that the secret should remain untold, as the man would very likely confess it, with the hope of lightening his own punishment. If such were the case, what would be the risk that he would himself run with regard to being discovered. There was, he argued, but little to be apprehended, as the clue seemed to be entirely

he left Jermyn Street. If possible, he reasoned, to establish an identity between Jones and himself? And the case should be resumed and covered, as far as the con-

child to the house occupied it must then and there fall for want of any further the Earl thus reasoned with became less and less excited, and his old composure, and laugh at his first fears; but not at ease, for a doubt and the future filled his breast with forebodings, which he found it entirely to dispel. Again and the account of the murder, and doubly convinced himself that as yet been nothing disclosed to uneasiness; but never to muse for a long event, which came the very midst of his business; and it was not

until after long deliberation that he came to the conclusion, that the only course open for him to pursue was to remain entirely quiet.

At first he had thought that he would visit the prisoner, and promise him to use all his influence to gain him his freedom; but then he reflected that that would place him at the mercy of the villain, who might at any moment deliver him into the hands of the officers of justice. When this idea was given up, he considered that he might send some trusty man to arrange the matter for him; but then that would entail the unpleasant and dangerous necessity of letting into the secret a third party, who might become uncontrollable. All these projects were abandoned as fast as made, and, as we have said, the Earl finally determined, after deliberation, that silence was the thing, and that he must quietly abide the result, which he hoped would be for the best; and that, in the meantime, he would provide himself against all emergencies.

Lord Merwyn, therefore, settled himself quietly down to await the issue of events, but not without taking every means of gathering information with reference to his late companion in crime. At one time he had seriously entertained a plan which he had deeply considered, which was this, that he should go at once to the scene of the crime and remove the body of Florence to some other place, so as to break down the statement of Tom, in one particular, at least, if he should make any confession. The only drawback was that it would require assistance to accomplish the undertaking, as he would not be able to do it by himself; and as Lord Merwyn had already had enough of letting anyone share his secret, he resolved to let the affair take its own course, being in the meantime on his guard against all danger. Having thus made up his mind, he threw off all thought of the gruesome subject, and fondly dreamed of the time which was soon to give to him Margaret Wendell as a bride; and sweet was the thought of the coming hap-

piness, although now and then shadowed by a passing cloud of the dislike felt for and expressed to him by the fair object of his choice. This, however, he thought would wear away in time, and calculated that, as soon as she was once his wife, and saw the foolishness of giving way to the feeling she entertained for Mr. Morton, she would eventually reciprocate her husband's burning love.

Anyone considering the Earl's position that day would have considered him a man to be envied; for it must have appeared to an uninformed spectator that Fortune smiled on him, that nothing that he wished for was withheld by the vexatious fates, and that everything bent before him. Yet it is to be hoped that all who met him that day would have refused to have exchanged positions with him.

When the Earl had finished his grim colloquy, he rang the bell, ordered the footman to call a Hansom, and was soon on his way to St. John's Wood, to visit his

mistress, who happened to be the young French woman Mr. Morton had met on the passage from Folkstone to Boulogne.

.

CHAPTER IX.

THE OPERA.

THE evening of the same day our friend Mr. Morton entered the doors of the Italian Opera, Covent Garden, and had been there only a few minutes, when he saw Lady Courtland, Lady Frances Atherly, and Margaret Wendell, accompanied by Lord Merwyn, seat themselves in a box. As soon as the first act was over, Mr. Morton left his place, and proceeded to pay his respects to Lady Courtland, by whom he was received with a most gracious smile, much to the disgust of the Earl, who had hoped that the advances of his rival would at least be checked by the Countess, and who did not consider that she had a

daughter to marry off, and that eligibles were not easily secured.

"I am delighted to see you," exclaimed the Countess, extending her hand to Mr. Morton.

"I hope that you feel none the worse for the ball last night?" said Mr. Morton, as he exchanged salutations with the rest of the party.

"Not at all," rejoined the Countess, "if I lose an hour or so in the beginning of the night, I always make it up by adding on in the morning, so in that way I do not tire myself out."

"A very good plan that; but I have slept too often under the open sky not to awake as soon as the broad daylight has summoned all living things to be active."

"Sleep under the open sky! How nice that must be!" cried Lady Frances; but at this moment the curtain rose, and the second act began. Piccolomini was acting in her favourite part, and this evening outdid herself in the beautiful and artistic representation. She was received with great

applause, and listened to with the most profound interest and attention. All the ladies were delighted with her, and the gentlemen were carried away with enthusiasm for the pretty fascinating Prima Donna, who was truly enchanting.

Attractive, however, as were the notes of the fair cantatrice, many a glass was levelled at Margaret, whose fame had spread through the London world as the great heiress and future Countess of Merwyn; and as her beauty had not been overlooked in the tale, all were anxious to see this new accession to the aristocratic circles of the town. Margaret was nervously aware that she was the object of much scrutiny, but soon ceased to notice it, as she became all absorbed in her delight at the presence of Mr. Morton, who remained for some time by her side, conversing with the inmates of the box.

In the course of conversation, the Countess said to Lord Merwyn:

“Who is that lady who seems by herself in the box opposite in the upper circle?

She does nothing but level her glass at you?"

The Earl's eye followed the direction given by the Countess; and as he fixed his eye on the lady in question, Lady Courtland noticed a slight start on the part of his lordship, who had recognized his mistress, the little French woman, Mademoiselle Vermont. Concealing his surprise as well as he could, Lord Merwyn replied that he did not know who the person was.

"It may be at you, Mr. Morton, that she looks with so much earnestness," said the Countess.

"I have seen that face somewhere," answered Mr. Morton, musing.

"She is very beautiful," cried Lord Merwyn.

"That she is," said Lady Frances.

"I remember now," rejoined Mr. Morton, "it was on the steamer crossing from Folkestone to Boulogne."

"She has the appearance of being French," said the Countess.

"She is," replied Mr. Morton.

"You know her, then?" asked Lord Merwyn.

"I conversed with her for some time; in fact, we travelled in the same carriage as far as Paris."

"Who is she?" asked Margaret, whose foolish heart was taking alarm at this mere shadow.

"Her name is Mademoiselle—I almost forget it—ah! now I have it—de Vermont—Mademoiselle de Vermont."

"It is pleasant to have so pretty a woman for one's travelling companion," said the Earl.

"Very pleasant indeed, till the moment of parting," said Mr. Morton, smiling.

"Did she return when you did?" asked the Earl.

"Oh! no, she was to return in a very short time, as her friends could not part with her for a long time; it was a baronet's family that she was with in England, and the name was—let me think, the name was Sir——"

Here Mr. Morton paused, for he saw that he had gone far enough to put the Earl on thorns. No one else noticed the agitation of Lord Merwyn.

"I cannot remember the name," continued Mr. Morton, giving his lordship a look, as much as to say, "You did not succeed in your purpose."

Their attention was now called off by the Opera, after which Mr. Morton took his leave, and returned to his seat. In a few minutes a knock was heard by the French woman at her box; she opened it, and saw Lord Merwyn, who did not enter, but said,

"You have almost got me into a scrape by looking so steadily at me; you should not have done so."

"I am sorry, *mon cher ami*—I will not do so again."

"You know the gentleman who was in the same box as myself?"

"I do."

"I wish you to keep your glass pointed towards him during the whole evening."

"What for, *mon cher*?"

"Never mind, but do as I wish."

"I am your slave!" replied the lady, tossing her pretty head.

"Then you will do so?"

"Yes, dear Henri."

"If you do it well, you shall have a present to-morrow of that bracelet you have been wanting."

"Thanks, you are a dear darling. You wish me to make someone jealous?" continued Mademoiselle, knowingly.

"Exactly, that is what I wish."

"You shall be obeyed."

The Earl returned to his party, and seated himself as if nothing had happened. In a few moments after he said,

"The attention of the pretty French woman has been turned from us, and seems now to be occupied with Mr. Morton; truly she appears to be very much pleased with her old Paris acquaintance."

This was said entirely for Margaret's benefit; but all eyes were at once turned upon the woman in question, who

really was gazing at Mr. Morton, who at that moment looked up at her box. Mademoiselle saw him, and smiled sweetly, motioning him to come to her. As Margaret saw this, her heart was in her throat, and it required great power on her part to control her agitation.

Lord Merwyn, who had been narrowly watching the face of Margaret during the scene, saw with great satisfaction the shaft sink deep into her heart, and determined to keep the wound open, as it would not do to let it heal. He saw that the first impression was made, and knew that Margaret's heart was soft, and easily worked upon. Love is anxious; and permits the most trifling things to ruffle its stream; the least adverse wind that blows sets its waters in commotion.

The loving heart may very readily be filled with misgivings and doubts, but demands strong proofs of devotion to make it believe that it is loved. There is no one thing more conducive to misery than an inclination to jealousy, which magnifies

every speck that flecks the horizon of love into a dark and threatening cloud, and permits not the anxious and miserable being to receive a true impression from the deeds and sayings of the loved one. "Trifles, light as air, are to the jealous confirmations strong as proofs of holy writ."

During the rest of the evening, Margaret's eyes were turned from the box containing the French woman to Mr. Morton, and then back to the box. She could not deny that the lady was beautiful, and she hated that very loveliness which she would on another occasion have admired. To drive from her mind the hateful subject she strove to believe that Lord Merwyn did not that night seem nearly as repellent as usual, and listened to his speeches with a half dreamy languor, from which she would ever and anon awake and try, by forced liveliness, to banish the thoughts which were gathering around her, like some "ghost or goblin damned," who strives to snatch away all that life holds most dear.

All of the party noticed this change in Margaret, but only one knew the cause of it, and that one was Lord Merwyn, who had been the prime mover of the plan which had this effect.

The time had now arrived for the party to leave the Opera. Lady Courtland and the two young ladies were conducted to their carriage by Lord Merwyn; and as they remained for a few moments in the vestibule, they were joined by Mr. Morton, who did not fail to notice the somewhat altered demeanour of Margaret towards him. Not knowing what the cause could be, he attributed it to her wish to turn aside any suspicion that might arise with regard to her feelings for him. With this pleasant conviction, Mr. Morton bade them good night, and left, after receiving from Miss Wendell a formal bow.

The ladies were soon in the carriage, and speedily arrived at Grosvenor Square, when Margaret retired at once to her own room, and there gave way to the feelings of grief which she could no longer restrain.

and I were great friends; did you tell him anything?"

"No, not a word about you escaped my lips. Tell me, what did he say?"

"He said nothing definitely, so as to enable the ladies to understand, but implied a great deal, which I comprehended."

"How extraordinary!"

"I was far from comfortable, and feared that he was on the point of exposing me."

"How dreadful, dear Henri!"

"You have often told me that you are very fond of me, and would do anything that I wish."

"I do love you."

"Are you willing to show your love by serving me?"

"With joy!" cried Adrienne, who was really very much attached to Lord Merwyn, who had always shown himself most kind and indulgent to her.

"What I wish you to do will be with regard to the gentleman at whom you looked so attentively this evening at the Opera."

which does credit to the rising generation. We leave it to philosophers to explain the cause, but there can be little doubt that there is never so much vice in society as when the external relations between the sexes are stiff and formal.

We may exclaim with pride that in these days of enlightenment there are no longer in existence any excessive restraints upon the free and uncontrolled enjoyment of conversation. We are not now obliged to keep watch and ward upon our tongues, for fear lest they should wound by what has been called indelicate remarks; no, that time is dead, and with an apparent relaxation of discipline has come a very sensible improvement in morals.

Had Margaret been at the Opera in 1865 instead of 18—, she would have had Mademoiselle de Vermont pointed out to her, and received a full explanation of her character and position; but at the date of our story, the Lord Merwyns of the day, vicious and wicked as they were, had within them a latent respect for virtuous

and respectable ladies, and the Miss Wendells of that time would have resented such conversation.

Tears and smiles alternated in the blue eyes of the fair Margaret, as now she believed all that her fears shadowed forth, and now disbelieved them, and for two whole hours she was tossed between these two contending emotions. Had she loved less truly, she might not have felt so deeply the sting of jealousy, which pierced through her heart without mercy. The light which had been throwing its soft effulgence upon her life was flickering and wavering, and leaving her a prey to the dark shadows which stole into her being and filled her soul with terror.

From these feelings she could not escape, but was like a bark tossed upon the tempestuous sea, near to a rocky shore, with now and then a glimpse of the friendly light-house, which would shine, fade and die away at times, and then come again.

Sleep at last stole softly upon her, gra-

dually closing her eyes and throwing forgetfulness over the past, and Margaret sank to repose after a night of unhappiness.

There is no doubt that many who read this book will say that Margaret had not sufficient cause for distrusting her lover; and to this the only answer we can make is, that love is inexplicable, and that the smallest speck oftentimes gives more uneasiness than great clouds; there are so many things to be considered in treating on this difficult and intricate subject, that we consider ourselves quite incapable of making it clear, and will therefore leave it to the wise judgments of others.

We will now return to the Opera, where we left Lord Merwyn. As soon as he had placed the ladies in the carriage, he went to his mistress's box, where she was waiting for him, and they immediately proceeded to her brougham, which was ready for them at the door, and which, in little over half an hour, conveyed them to a pleasant little villa in St. John's Wood, surrounded by about half an acre of garden.

When they had entered the house, they sat in the drawing-room awaiting a supper which was being prepared for them.

"Mon cher Henri, why were you angry with me for looking at you with my opera-glass?" exclaimed Adrienne, which was the Christian name of Mademoiselle de Vermont.

"You know as well as I do that all the people in the box with me saw you, and at once inquired if you were a friend of mine," answered the Earl.

"And you said no—you told them that you had never seen me before?" cried Adrienne laughingly.

"That was just what I said, dearest Adrienne," replied his lordship.

"Did I not expiate my fault by pointing my glass at your friend?"

"He is no friend of mine," and the Earl's brow became overspread with a dark cloud.

"An enemy, then?"

"Yes, an enemy."

"What good did my looking at him do?"

"Never mind now; I will tell you all in good time."

"But I am curious to know."

"Women are always curious."

The supper was now brought in; the Earl and Adrienne drew their chairs to the table, which was near them, and continued their conversation during the repast.

"That man was a great friend of yours?" said Lord Merwyn.

"What do you mean, Henri?" cried Adrienne.

"He said that you were his companion on the journey to Paris?"

"We met on the steamer, and he recognized me as being one of a party he had seen at Richmond."

"Oh, that was all! I thought from his speech that there was more in it."

"You are unkind, Henri, to say that!" cried Adrienne, reproachfully.

"I meant nothing, my pet; never mind what I said."

"I knew you did not."

"He as much as indicated that you

and I were great friends; did you tell him anything?"

"No, not a word about you escaped my lips. Tell me, what did he say?"

"He said nothing definitely, so as to enable the ladies to understand, but implied a great deal, which I comprehended."

"How extraordinary!"

"I was far from comfortable, and feared that he was on the point of exposing me."

"How dreadful, dear Henri!"

"You have often told me that you are very fond of me, and would do anything that I wish."

"I do love you."

"Are you willing to show your love by serving me?"

"With joy!" cried Adrienne, who was really very much attached to Lord Merwyn, who had always shown himself most kind and indulgent to her.

"What I wish you to do will be with regard to the gentleman at whom you looked so attentively this evening at the Opera."

"What can I do?" exclaimed Adrienne in amazement.

"As yet I have not completely arranged my plan, but the substance is this—The lady you saw in the box with me, in the green silk dress with pearl ornaments——"

"I saw her—she is beautiful!" exclaimed Adrienne, with all the vivacity of her volatile French nature.

"She is, as you justly say, most lovely."

"Come, be quick, for I am dying to hear what you are going to say."

"She is, I am certain, in love with that gentleman, and I wish to arrive at some plan by which we can make her jealous of him. Do you comprehend me?" asked Lord Merwyn.

"Thoroughly," replied his fair companion, whilst she said to herself—"So, my friend, you are looking for a wife! But never mind!"

"What I wish you to do is this," said Lord Merwyn, after a long pause, during which he had been ruminating—"to write

to Mr. Morton a friendly letter, asking him to come and see you."

"Do you think that he would do it?"

"There is but little doubt of it; even if he does not, there will be no harm in trying."

"Very true."

"Are you willing to do it?"

"Perfectly."

"Then you had better set about it this very night."

"So soon?"

"The sooner the better."

"As you wish."

Lord Merwyn then rang for the servant, who took away the remains of the supper, and placed the writing materials on the table.

"You must tell me what to write," said Adrienne, taking the pen in her hand.

"Commence by saying, 'My dear Mr. Morton.'"

"Wait a moment—I have an idea!" exclaimed Adrienne.

"What is it, my pet?"

"He promised to come and see me in Paris, and never did."

"Did you ask him?" cried Lord Merwyn, his brow darkening at her words.

"No, no; he begged to be allowed to pay me a visit, and I refused," said she colouring.

"How could he have called on you, if you had not told him where you lived?"

"He discovered that before he mentioned about coming."

This was entirely false, as our readers must know, from what already occurred on the passage to Paris from London; and Lord Merwyn saw that it was false, but as he had a purpose in view, he pretended to be satisfied, and said,

"That is all right—you may reproach him for not fulfilling his promise. Ha! ha! ha! that is not a bad idea, you little rogue!"

The French woman responded with a soft silvery laugh, which rang clearly through the room.

"Write as I direct, and then we can examine it afterwards to see if it will do."

"Ormond Lodge, St. John's Wood, May, 18—.

"MY DEAR MR. MORTON,

"It is now some time since we had the pleasure of meeting on the steamer, crossing from Folkestone to Boulogne. The passage was rendered very pleasant by your presence. On seeing you last night at the Opera, I involuntarily thought of the kind promise you made to call on me in Paris. I told you then that the gay capital of France would render itself too attractive to you, to allow even a momentary thought of me to exist in your memory. Time shows that I was right. I still, however, hold you to the pledge of calling; but as we are in England, London must serve instead of Paris. If you intend coming for a few minutes to see me, I wish that you would, by a note, inform me on what day, and at what hour I may expect you.—"Yours,

"ADRIENNE DE VERMONT."

After finishing the letter, she read it to the Earl, who expressed himself well satisfied with it.

"That will do very well," said Lord Merwyn.

"Do you think that he will come?"

"Very probably."

This letter was posted the next morning, and reached Mr. Morton at his Club that afternoon. He was very much surprised at receiving this epistle, and resolved at once not to call, but at the same time thought that he could not do less than answer so courteous a note, even though it came from one of a questionable character. Actuated by this feeling he sat down and wrote the following:—

"Club, May, 18—

"DEAR MADEMOISELLE DE VERMONT,

"I have this afternoon received your kind note referring to our former meeting on the steamer. I was sorry not to be able to keep my promise of calling on you in Paris; but reasons, which your •

opera glass may have informed you of the other night, prevent me now from accepting your kind invitation to come to your house.

“Yours truly,

“R. MORTON.”

This reached its destination the same evening, and was read with much disappointment by Adrienne, who was most anxious to please the Earl, whom she expected to arrive every minute. As the clock on the mantelpiece chimed forth the hour of ten, the front door bell rang, and the expected one soon entered the drawing-room.

“Good evening, dear Henri!” cried Adrienne, rushing forward to embrace him.

“I am glad to see you, pet,” answered his lordship, kissing her.

“I thought that you would come sooner.”

“I could not; but here is something for you.”

- And he drew a velvet case from his pocket, which he handed to her.

The case was opened in a trice, revealing a magnificent diamond bracelet.

"How beautiful!" cried Adrienne, gazing with intense admiration at the sparkling gems. "Is it not lovely? How good and kind of you!" she continued. "Thanks, mon cher."

She did not stop looking at the jewel until Lord Merwyn asked her if she had received any answer from Mr. Morton, when her countenance visibly fell.

"I received an answer about twenty minutes ago."

"Is he coming?"

"No."

"Give me the letter."

She complied, and he soon read the answer to the note he had composed the night before.

"It is very unfortunate. I had hoped that he would fall in love with you, but the fool," muttered the Earl between his clenched teeth, "loves *her* too much for that."

"Is it all at an end now, then?"

"No, no; not so—it has only begun."

"What do you mean?"

"You have told me that you possess the faculty of counterfeiting the handwriting of anyone, and I have seen some specimens of your art which were most successful."

"What is it that you wish? I do not at all comprehend you."

"The first thing that I wish you to do is, that you copy out a fac-simile of this note, and imitate the hand as nearly as possible."

"I must practise for a few minutes."

"As long as you wish. I will give you half an hour, and in the meanwhile I will read."

So saying, he took a book from the table, and composed himself quietly in his chair.

Adrienne set about the task, and after a little practice with regard to the style and formation of the letters, she began the letter, and at the end of twenty-five minutes it was finished, and placed be-

fore the Earl, who inspected it with great satisfaction.

"Which is the original, my pet?" exclaimed the Earl in pretended admiration.

"This one," said Adrienne, who had marked the original.

"It is really wonderful how well you do these things—no one would ever discover the cheat."

"I should do better, if I were in practice."

"Better, my dear child! It is perfect as it is."

"I am glad that you think so."

"We will do no more at present. You had better put those letters carefully away until they are wanted."

CHAPTER X.

THE CLUB.

ABOUT ten days after the occurrences of the last chapter, the first drawing-room of the season was to take place. Margaret and Lady Bertha were to be presented at it by the Countess of Courtland; and the two weeks preceding this day had been occupied in making the necessary preparations for the great occasion, which was to bring them face to face with Royalty. Lady Courtland was in her element in matters of this sort, and, having taken upon herself the full control and direction of everything, had relieved Margaret of many little troubles and annoyances which invariably wait upon such an occasion of this nature. Milliners had been consulted, and

the family jewels were brought out. (Ah! who will ever write the history of family jewels!)

It was decided that Margaret should be adorned with pearls; partly, perhaps, because it happened that among the jewels belonging to the Wendell family was an abundance of beautiful pearls, finer or more choice than which could not be found. The set which Margaret was to wear was composed of a necklace of one string of large pearls, clasped with a magnificent diamond of the purest water, attached to a cross of brilliants, together with earrings of pear-shaped pearls, with single diamonds as tops, and two bracelets, having four rows of pearls each, fastened with a clasp of three large diamonds.

The Countess was to appear in a set of brilliants, and Lady Bertha was to have her mother's pearl ornaments. Margaret and Lady Bertha of course wore white silk dresses, with trains of the same; whilst Lady Courtland was to wear pink, which she considered the most becoming to her

style of beauty and complexion, and in this she was correct. Lord Courtland was to accompany them. Mr. Wendell had been induced, after much persuasion, to go ; but he had consented with a bad grace, and said that if he complied he should expect Frances to go also. This pleased the young lady immensely, as she had wished to see her cousin presented, but had not been able to induce her mother to consent. Lady Courtland no longer refused, however, when asked by her brother.

At one o'clock on the eventful day, they were ready to start, and were all assembled in the drawing-room. And it may be interesting to inveterate readers of the *Court Circular* to know, that Lord Courtland was dressed in his uniform as a general in the army, and was decorated with different orders, whilst Mr. Wendell wore the uniform of a deputy-lieutenant of his county.

It need scarcely be said, that Lady Catherine did not let slip so favourable an opportunity of creating noise, turmoil, and universal inconvenience. At first she had

entertained the magnificent idea of crying herself hoarse, because her mother would not take her to the drawing-room together with her sisters; but she relinquished this plan in favour of a general raid amongst silks, laces, and jewelry, and the spasmodic expression of admiration.

"Cousin Margaret is so beautiful in her white silk dress and train, with those lovely pearls, she is like a queen!" cried Lady Catherine, standing before her cousin with clasped hands.

"How do you like us, Katie?" asked her sister Bertha.

"Not at all, none of you are nearly as nice as dear Margaret."

"Don't be rude, child," exclaimed Lady Frances.

"Why should I not prefer Margaret if I like?"

"You may if you like; but that is no reason why you should be rude," said Lady Courtland.

Lady Catherine here took Margaret's fan, and began to act as if she were being pre-

sented, much to the amusement of all, except Margaret, who expected to see her fan broken, or spoilt, before the performance was at an end.

The carriages at length drove up to the door, and the party were about to descend, when Lady Catherine insisted on their remaining until she had finished; this they were obliged to do, or else the little one would have made the room resound with her cries.

At length they were released from the tyranny of the child, who reigned paramount in the house.

They arrived near St. James's Palace at about half-past two o'clock, and as they were slowly driving in the long string of carriages of which they formed a part, the numerous crowds on the pavements stared at them, and made various comments on their personal appearance, dress, and jewels.

"I say, Bill," cried a ragged little boy to his friend, "my eye, ain't she a stunner!"

Bill looked in the direction of the object

pointed out by the dirty finger of his friend, and when he saw Margaret he was also captivated by her appearance, at least so his reply indicated.

“Well, Jim, may I be blowed if ever I see her likes! She is three times as handsome as pretty Jane, whom the fellows are all after.”

“Don’t I wish I had some of them pearls and diamonds. She must be some big swell.”

“What an old fright that lady with her is!”

“T’other girl ain’t bad!” exclaimed Bill, with true admiration.

Here the carriage passed by the two critics, who were prepared to give their opinion on everybody they saw.

Margaret was very much amused at their remarks, and so was the Countess until they spoke of her, when she no longer saw the fun of their speeches. The idea of her being called a fright, even by those low street-boys, was too much for her pride; and it was not till she was actually at the

Court that the rude saying was forgotten.

At three o'clock our party reached the place for alighting, and ascended the staircase to the room where the Court was held. They remained in the ante-room until their turn came, and having been then announced, they passed into the room, kissed the Queen's hand, and went out by another door. This was over in a moment; they had but a momentary glimpse of their sovereign, and all was over.

The next day, at the — Club, the general subjects of conversation were the "Drawing-room," and the new beauty who had been presented. All the men who had seen her were in raptures, and no words could describe the disappointment and chagrin felt by all when they heard that the fair one was engaged to be married.

There were a number of gentlemen congregated in the reading-room discussing the new accession to the ranks of fashion and aristocracy, and among them were the Marquis of Marston—an intimate friend of Mr. Morton's—the Earl of Sandford, Captain

Russell, Lord Renford, Mr. Morton, and the young Duke of Melrose, who had just come into his property, after twenty years of minority.

The late Duke had left the estate unencumbered, with a rent-roll of one hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds, of which one hundred thousand pounds a-year had been allowed to accumulate. The dowager-duchess had a jointure of ten thousand pounds, and the use of one of the country-houses, and the other fifteen thousand pounds had been used in keeping up the different places, and educating the young Duke. By the careful and judicious management of his guardians, his Grace of Melrose was now in the possession of some three million pounds in ready money ; and, unlike many a young nobleman, who would have made ducks and drakes with this enormous surplus, he at once invested it in land, and so raised his rent-roll from one hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds to two hundred and fifty thousand pounds a-year, making himself the wealthiest duke in England. He was na-

turally the object of all mothers who had daughters to marry, and many a maid sighed to wear the ducal coronet he had to bestow; but as yet the heart of this envied nobleman had remained intact.

The Duke of Melrose was just turned twenty-one, was somewhat above the middle-height, slender, and well-proportioned. His hair was bright brown, with a golden tinge running through its waving curls, which clustered on a broad massive forehead of good height; the eyebrows were thick, and a shade darker than the hair; the eyes were of a light hazel, large, bright and full of expression, fringed with long dark lashes; the nose was a nondescript one, the upper lip short, and covered with a dark brown moustache; the mouth small, and beautifully shaped; the chin a square, Roman one, and the cheeks sufficiently plump, and tinged with a rosy hue. When a smile caused his lips to part, beneath them were displayed teeth of dazzling whiteness, and of the most perfect shape.

Many were the soft glances he received from the fair sex, and many were the encouragements bestowed on him by managing mammas and anxious papas; but he had as yet divided his attentions very fairly among all the pretty girls of his acquaintance, each of whom built on his smile a castle of air, which soon faded away.

His Grace was very fond of the turf, but kept within his rent-roll, never allowing the cost of his stud, or the amount of his bets, to run over his income. Although passionately fond of racing, before he came of age he never ran into debt, but made his tastes coincide with his allowance.

"I say, Sandford, that was a beautiful girl that Lady Courtland presented yesterday at the Drawing-room!" exclaimed the Duke.

"She was, indeed," replied the Earl of Sandford.

"Do you know her?" asked the Duke.

"No, I do not even know her name," replied the Earl.

"I can inform you," cried Lord Renford.

"Out with it, then," said his Grace.

"She is a Miss Wendell, a niece of Lady Courtland."

"Do you know her?" rejoined the Duke.

"Very well indeed."

"He ought to, as I heard the other day that he was engaged to her cousin, Lady Frances Atherly," said Lord Marston.

"Is that really why you know this beauty, Renford?" said the Duke.

"I suppose I must not deny it," replied Lord Renford.

"You must introduce me on the very first occasion!" cried his Grace.

"I will do so with pleasure, but I must first tell you that she is already engaged to be married," answered Lord Renford.

"By Jove! she has been quickly caught up—almost before she has come into the market. That is not fair!" said the Duke, laughing.

"Not at all," exclaimed Lord Marston.

"Who is the happy fellow?" asked Captain Russell.

"Do we know him?" inquired the Duke.

"Very well indeed; he is a member of the Club. His name is Merwyn—the Earl of Merwyn," replied Lord Renford.

"He is a lucky dog!" cried the party with one voice.

"Did Merwyn know her in the country?" asked Lord Marston.

"He was then Sir Henry Hargreave, and his estate joined that of Mr. Wendell, who was a great friend of Sir Harold's. These two parents promised the hands of their children when the said children were not old enough to speak," said Lord Renford.

"What a pair of donkeys they must have been! Did you ever hear anything half so absurd?" said the Duke.

"That is not all the story," rejoined Lord Renford; "the promise was made with respect to this Miss Wendell and Robert, the eldest son of Sir Harold; but on

the old Baronet's death the young heir, for what reasons I cannot tell, left his home within a few weeks after the funeral, and has never been seen since. Some say that his mother was cruel to him."

"Has his death ever been ascertained?" asked Captain Russell.

"Oh, yes! the authorities of some place in Australia sent over the necessary proofs, so as to enable Sir Henry to assume the title," replied Lord Renford.

"It is quite a romantic story, well worthy the pen of some sensation writer," exclaimed Lord Sandford.

"Is the fair one willing to carry out this extraordinary wish of her parent?" asked his Grace.

"Not at all; she detests her future husband," said Lord Renford.

"Her father must be a brute to force her into the union," rejoined the Duke.

"He is too proud to break his word."

"The more fool he, for allowing such a nice sense of honour to ruin the happiness of his child!" cried Lord Sandford.

"My sister, the Duchess of Melford, who is Mistress of the Robes, told me last night that the Queen had taken especial notice of Miss Wendell, and considered her the most lovely girl she had seen for a long time," exclaimed his Grace.

"I was told this morning that Lord Merwyn has been made Gentleman of the Bed-chamber to the Prince Consort," said Captain Russell.

"I wonder if it is true," said Lord Renford.

"I was told the same thing by my sister," added the Duke.

"Are you doing anything for Ascot?" said his Grace to Lord Sandford.

"I have a slight book on the races," he replied.

Mr. Morton, during all this conversation, had not uttered a word, but listened attentively to everything that was said.

Lord Merwyn entered the room just in time to hear the Duke's inquiry about Ascot.

"Are you offering any odds?" said he, addressing the Duke.

"Yes. I will bet you ten to one that your horse does not win!" cried his Grace.

"Done!" replied the Earl; "how much shall it be? I will make it a thousand to ten. Will that suit you?"

"Perfectly," answered the Duke.

"Does anyone else want to do anything on my book?" asked Lord Merwyn, looking round him.

"I will do the same for half the amount," cried Captain Russell.

"Now I will tell you what I will do," said Lord Merwyn to the Duke, "and that is, that I will back Mr. Howard's Favorite, three to five!"

"I will take that!" exclaimed the Duke, "let it be three thousand to five thousand pounds."

"Very well," replied Lord Merwyn.

"I will take that wager also!" cried Captain Russell and Lord Sandford.

The books were then closed, as there was no more business to be done. Lord

Merwyn had already enormous wagers on the coming Ascot, and could have lost one hundred thousand pounds, if everything should go against him.

"Allow me to congratulate you," said his Grace, addressing Lord Merwyn, "on the prize you have drawn from the lottery of life. We have all been envying you this morning."

"You are very kind," replied Lord Merwyn, bowing.

"She is truly a most lovely woman!" said Lord Marston. "Have you not seen her, Morton?" continued the Marquis.

"Oh, yes, several times. I saw her the other night at the Opera," replied Mr. Morton.

"Do you not admire her?" asked Captain Russell.

"Immensely. I have never seen a woman whom I consider more lovely than she," rejoined Mr. Morton.

"You speak like a man who is in love with the fair one. You must look sharp, my lord, or we shall be stealing this prize from you."

"There is no fear from men of honour," replied the Earl, glancing fiercely at Mr. Morton.

"Do not be too certain; honour, of late years, has become a thing of the past," cried Lord Sandford.

"There are but few bright examples of chivalry now extant; there are not many representatives of those old times now living. Lord Merwyn believes in the old Scotch honour of his ancient family, when a chieftain would blend murder and honour in the same conscience," said Mr. Morton.

Lord Merwyn grew as pale as death, and only succeeded in concealing his agitation at this home-thrust by a great effort.

"You are unjust to our ancestors; we, like all others, do not like to speak against that which we have," replied the Earl, with marked emphasis.

Mr. Morton smiled at this speech, turned to Lord Renford and said, "We must be going in a few moments to see this fair one; come with us," he continued, speaking to the Duke.

Everybody saw that there was an unpleasant feeling existing between Lord Merwyn and Mr. Morton, both of whom were popular among their friends, Mr. Morton, however, being the most esteemed. At one time the other gentlemen were afraid that something more decided would grow out of this discussion, and were glad to see Mr. Morton make the move to go.

In about five minutes from this time the three gentlemen were on their way to Grosvenor Square, which place they reached in a short time, and entered the portals of the mansion belonging to the Earl of Courtland. The Duke had known the Countess some three years before, and was received by her with the greatest cordiality. Mr. Morton noticed on this occasion signs of marked coolness on the part of Margaret, but did not have an opportunity of speaking so as to demand an explanation. They separated, both of them with heavy hearts. Margaret's being torn with doubt and distrust, whilst Mr. Morton's was grieved at the unkindness of his mistress.

We shall soon have cause to enter more fully into the particulars of Margaret's feelings towards her lover, and also to show the workings of a plan adopted by her intended husband.

CHAPTER XI.

THE WORKING OF THE EARL'S PLAN.

MARGARET was seated in her chamber reading a letter which she had received that morning from Mr. Morton. The manner in which the epistle had reached her hands was this: Mr. Morton's valet was the cousin of one of the footmen, and through him had the missive come to Miss Wendell. The contents of this letter are too long to give it in full, but we will give our readers some idea of it. He at first complained of the coolness of her manner, for which he had given no cause. He then spoke of his never-dying love, and referred to the time, which he hoped was not far distant, when everything would shape itself for their good and happiness.

He prayed that she would at once answer, and let him know why she had treated him in such a changed manner.

The heart of Margaret was softened and affected by this tender appeal to her love; she could not bear Mr. Morton's reproaches, and felt them the more deeply because they were couched in the most devoted language. Tears came to the relief of her over-charged feelings, and at the end of an hour all suspicion of the loved one had flown, driven away before the returning confidence, as the rising sun dispels the mist of morning which has gathered over the earth in his absence.

Sweet thoughts again filled her mind, and day-dreams as soft and light as the curling smoke that rises heavenward from some cottage chimney, lulled to sleep the sufferings of the past. Happiness again seemed on the point of crowning her with its wreath of joy; she smiled, and pressed the letter to her beating heart, and kissed it again and again, and ever and anon would brush some bright silver tear from her blue eyes. There is no moment in life so sweet as the one

that comes after a reconciliation. When the lover is forgiven, he becomes far more loved than ever; all his faults are forgotten, and all his goodness is magnified tenfold by the partial heart of love. Would that the current of Margaret's life might continue to run on as smoothly as her thoughts now flow!

Margaret, in compliance with her lover's wish, answers the letter which has caused her so much joy. She tells him how foolish she was to be influenced by so foolish a thing as his knowing and smiling at the French woman, and promises never again to allow herself to be unkind. The epistle is full of love and soft sayings, that bring joy to the lover. She had never before opened her heart to Mr. Morton, nor would she have done so, had not the unpleasant suspicion filled her mind for a short time. She now felt that some atonement was necessary, and considered this the most acceptable to the injured one. Maiden modesty peered out in all her sentences of love, and twined itself in and out of the whole letter.

The answer having been written, enclosed in an envelope, and sealed, Margaret was on the point of looking for the footman, whose name was Henry, to give it to him, that he might, in his turn, hand it to Mr. Morton's valet; but just as she was on the point of doing so, a knock at the door was heard, the maid entered, and a note was handed to her from Mr. Morton. She dismissed the servant, and in another moment was eagerly devouring the epistle. On opening it, what was her amazement at seeing it headed, "My darling Adrienne!" Truly this was Mr. Morton's writing, and to convince herself she turned to the signature, which was "Robert," and confirmed her suspicions. Then returning to the commencement, she read as follows:—

"MY DARLING ADRIENNE,

"The contents of your letter fill me with amazement. Why should you for a moment imagine that I am false to my plighted love, I cannot say. Surely it must be some foolish fancy of your own;

it must be the pure creation of your anxious mind, for in reality you have no reason for doubting my love and devotion, which is yours, and yours only, for ever. Some idle mischief-maker must have lied to you, when they said that I loved another, and that one was Margaret Wendell. I should be sorry, indeed, to give up my fair-haired love for Miss Wendell, or any woman living. My heart is yours, until death shall part us. Throw away, I conjure you, these cruel and unjust suspicions which your letter indicates that you hold toward me. Never again, I pray, entertain such doubts as to my fidelity. I mean that none other shall fill the heart where your dear image now reigns paramount. I will come to you to-morrow; until then, adieu, loved one! May the angels watch over thee, and guard thee from all harm!

“Your devoted lover,

“ROBERT.”

The letter dropped from Margaret's

nerveless grasp, when she had finished perusing its contents.

"Can this be a dream? or is it a terrible reality, which has come to dash the cup of bliss from my lips, just as the first drop was tasted? Why is this letter written to another and addressed to me? It may not be from him? but then the writing. Horrible! horrible! He says plainly that he loves another, and that he never loved Margaret Wendell! And am I thus insulted!"

With this she drew herself to her full height, and the fire flashed from her eyes. This, however, was but for a moment—her pride sank beneath the weight of the blow.

"He loves another!" she sobbed, "and tells her that he could not love Margaret. Ah! woe is me, that I should be the toy of a false heart!—the plaything for his idle hours!—one to whom he can say soft words of love, with his eyes confirming them, while all the time he laughs at my simplicity in believing all these flatteries. Oh! woman, thou art weak, when

thou dost listen to the whisperings of man, and hold his sayings as true. He tells her that he loves her only, and that his devotion is to her for ever! The same words that he often whispered to my too willing ear. Would that I had been deaf! Alas! alas! he says that his heart is hers, and hers only, until death! It is the same promise he made to me. His vows are as light as air, and I am deceived, neglected, and despised by the man who swore to love and cherish me. But at any rate, he shall this day know that a daughter of the house of Wendell is not to be insulted and treated as a toy for the amusement of his idle moments."

Her tears flowed fast and thick, and her bosom seemed about to burst with its tumultuous heavings, as she prepared to sign her own death-warrant for another's sins. The letter she had written some time before was now torn to bits; and though the mist of grief had gathered over her eyes, Margaret sat down to write the following:—

"MR. MORTON,

"I received a letter from you this morning, to which I can only reply that I beg it may be the last. I will enter into no explanations, as your conscience will accuse you of your own conduct. I trust that we shall never meet again, as it would be painful for me to behold one so false.

"Yours truly,

"MARGARET WENDELL."

This was sealed and delivered to the footman, who, in turn, gave it to his cousin, through whom it reached Mr. Morton that afternoon; and never was a man more astonished than was our friend, when he received it.

What had he done to bring upon his head her displeasure, he could not imagine; and after racking his brain in vain to discover some cause for this extraordinary conduct, he was at length obliged to give up the inquiry as useless. For what reason she should consider that his con-

science ought to accuse him, he could not for his life understand.

All at once the remembrance of his affair in Paris flashed across his mind, and he asked himself whether she knew of that. But even if she did, how could that be the cause of this sudden outbreak, as it occurred before he had ever spoken to her of love.

"Surely," he thought, "I have been most faithful to her from the moment that the first word of affection escaped my lips. No, no; it must be impossible for her to know aught of my doings in Paris."

He was perplexed, and almost crazed by the letter, as he read and re-read it over and over again, endeavouring to draw from its contents some light to throw upon the inexplicable mystery. He was wild with grief, and a prey to the most heart-rending anxiety that could fill the bosom of man. What would he not have given for one moment of time with Margaret, that he might be enabled to demand an explanation. He felt as if it would be a re-

lief to have the earth open and swallow him, and thus end these moments of agony.

“Margaret! Margaret!” he cried in accents of deep despair, “am I to lose you?—is the bright dream of my life to fade before the first breath of suspicion? Have you no more trust in me?—are your proofs so strong as to set all explanation at naught? No; this cannot be; and I will not yield my happiness without a struggle.”

He resolved to sit down and write to Margaret, and demand for what reason she had written to him in so cruel and unkind a manner.

This was soon done, and that evening his valet carried the missive to its destination, having been told to wait for an answer. This he did, and in a few minutes received the same letter to re-convey to his master.

Mr. Morton was waiting with the greatest possible anxiety to receive an answer; and judge of his astonishment and dismay when he saw his own letter returned un-

opened, with a few lines written on the envelope by Margaret, saying that she begged he would no longer trouble her with his unwished-for communications. Had he been struck by a thunderbolt, his terror and alarm could not have been greater. He saw that, unless some miracle favoured him, his case was hopeless. He was maddened with despair; and in that moment of his grief saw, as though in a vision, who was the mover of this atrocious design, and swore vengeance deep and deadly; no longer would he restrain his hand.

Mr. Morton made up his mind that his present misfortune must have proceeded from some plan set in motion by the Earl of Merwyn, and resolved to probe the matter to the bottom. There was no use in his writing, as all his letters would be returned unopened; nor would he, if he should call, be enabled to speak upon the subject, as he could never hope to find Margaret by herself. Suddenly an idea struck him, and a light was thrown upon the mystery,

and what this idea was may be gathered from the following words which fell from Mr. Morton's lips :

"The Earl of Merwyn is a man to be narrowly watched ; his blows fall on one in the dark, unseen but felt. I have been as lenient to him as I possibly could be, but now the law of self-preservation compels me to act."

Mr. Morton's letter, which had been handed to Margaret by her maid, had been a sore temptation. With all a woman's curiosity she wished to break the seal, and see if it contained any explanation of her lover's conduct ; but the positive proofs of his falseness which she had, as she thought, in her possession, deterred her from doing as her first impulse had prompted her.

It was hard, indeed, thus to sever every link that bound them ; but pride and outraged love demanded the sacrifice, and it was made, although with a heavy heart. .

CHAPTER XII.

ASCOT.

IN a few days after this occurrence the Ascot meeting was to take place, and many people of the world of fashion were to grace the races with their presence; and among others Lord Merwyn was to go, accompanied by the Countess of Courtland, her daughters and Margaret, the Earl of Courtland, his son, the Viscount Atherly, and Lord Renford.

The preparations were all made; and on the morning of the 9th of June, at eleven o'clock, the party were seated in the train at Paddington station, and arrived at Windsor about ten minutes to one, where they found two carriages and four awaiting their arrival. These had

been provided by the Earl of Merwyn from his own stables, and the postilions were in mourning.

The carriages, which were built purposely for this occasion, were splendid; and the horses, which were all grey, were large and beautifully shaped. When the party were ready to start, they dashed away in high spirits. The Countess of Courtland, Margaret, Lord Merwyn, and the Earl occupied one carriage; while Lady Frances, Lady Bertha, Lord Renford, and Viscount Atherly were in the other.

They soon entered Windsor Park, and traversed its finely-wooded grounds, dashing along avenues lined with magnificent old trees, beyond which the deer could be seen quietly grazing, running swiftly along, or basking in the bright sunshine of the heavenly day. Birds were flying from tree to tree, soaring in mid-air, or perched on some branch, pouring forth soft strains of melodious music, which filled the air with sweetness, and ravished

the listening ear. The spring had blended with the opening summer, and made the earth a paradise.

On such a day as this did our party gaily dash through the splendid scenery of Windsor Park; but, alas! this brightness and gaiety of the summer day found no echo in the agonised heart of Margaret, who was too much alive to her own sufferings to admit to her soul the tranquil sweetness of the day, which was faint with the perfumes of the flowers and plants which covered the generous lap of Mother Earth.

She saw and felt the warm bright influence of this day, as one might watch the happiness of a friend, when his own life was misery. Would this last for ever? she would sometimes ask herself; would the scenes of the past never fade before the influences of the present?

Passing quickly on, through varying scenery, the party neared the course; and after ten minutes' drive along a road with hedges on each side, they drove up

to the Stand, and were soon in their box, awaiting the races.

We will now glance about the inclosure, and from thence wander among the carriages, to see if there are any faces known to our readers amid this vast concourse of human beings. As we walk leisurely along, we meet Mr. Wilton and his nephew, who are watching the throng. Also standing with some friends we see the Count de la Tour, who had come over to be present at the Ascot races.

Suddenly we notice a great commotion among the people, and loud shouts and uncovered heads indicate the appearance of the Sovereign Queen of Great Britain, who returns the loyal demonstrations of her faithful subjects with many a bow and smile. By her side was the noble Prince Consort, to whom the nation owes a never-ending debt of gratitude for his invaluable services; for he devoted his life wholly to the English people, and by his acts demonstrated that his adopted country was ever near and dear to his heart.

We were pleased to see the Sovereign coming before the people, and also pleased to witness the love borne to her by her subjects; it was an affecting sight, and one that cannot be easily erased from the tablets of the memory.

After standing for some time before Royalty, we turn our steps toward the carriages which line the opposite side of the way, and, moving slowly through the dense masses, we at length come to a drag, upon which are seated a number of persons familiar to the reader, namely, Mr. Morton, the Duke of Melrose, the Earl of Sandford, Captain Russell, and the Marquis of Marston. The drag was in a position which gave our friends a commanding view of the course. Each and everyone had his book, more or less heavy on the races; and we may mention that Mr. Morton's book amounted to some ten thousand pounds. But it was not the fear of loss that gave to his countenance the gloomy and desponding expression which saddened his face; his thoughts were not confined to the race and its re-

sults, but wandered to a far different subject, one which lay next his heart, and filled his whole being with grief—and that was, the wonderful and almost inexplicable conduct of Margaret. He had found, however, some clue to the mystery, and he had determined that the next day should not fade into darkness without having witnessed some attempt on his part to probe the matter to its utmost depth.

The first race was about to begin; the horses were brought out, and given their preliminary canter, and then stood length to length, making a straight line with their heads. It was very picturesque and pleasing to the eye to see those twelve noble horses waiting with impatience to begin the struggle for supremacy, with every muscle ready to be used to the utmost need, their eyes flashing fire, and their whole frames trembling with the desire to start.

The jockeys in their jackets of different colours looked brilliant, lending a gaiety to the scene; and as our eye wanders mechani-

cally over the group, we discern the colours of Lord Merwyn, whose jockey, wearing a blue jacket with white sleeves and a white cap, is mounted on "Favourite," his lordship's best horse.

At length the signal is given, the horses spring forward, losing at once their regularity of front, and seem like a confused body of cavalry, the foremost flying for life, whilst the others endeavour to keep as close as possible for protection. This similitude, however, is lost, as some individual horse darts from the mass, and takes the lead, whilst another follows on his track and presses closely in the rear. Behind these are three together, the rest having gradually dropped behind. At length one of these three horses, which have kept well together for some time, suddenly increases in speed, leaves his companions, and dashes away in fine style after the two who are ahead, and slowly but surely gains on them. The two who have been left are at the same time joined by three others who have pressed on; but the five soon separate, some

4

rushing ahead, whilst others fall behind, and the race is henceforth confined to the three first horses, who are only a few lengths apart. The last one now seems to lose inch by inch the ground he had gained so gallantly, and heavy odds are given against him; the colours of the jockey, blue and white, proclaiming him as Lord Merwyn's. The race continues with unabated vigour until the foremost horse is within two hundred yards of the goal, the second being some three lengths behind, and "Favourite" about ten, when the leader begins to lose, and a loud shout is raised for the second, who passes in splendid style. The race is now unanimously given to him, when "Favourite" put on a spurt at the right time, and nears the leader with tremendous strides. Whilst the odds were being given against his horse, Lord Merwyn had taken them with a desperate recklessness, and had thus an enormous amount on the result.

He now sees his racer overtaking the leader with rapid strides, but everyone feels confident that the space is too great for

“Favourite” to make up, and still heavy bets are made against the Earl’s horse.

There are now only thirty yards more to be run, and the “Favourite” is three lengths in the rear, when the Duke of Melrose offers to double his wager with Lord Merwyn, Captain Scott does the same; these offers are accepted, and all three look with renewed interest upon the contest. The chances for the “Favourite” rapidly grow less and less—there are only ten yards more, and he still lacks a length. Lord Merwyn becomes awfully excited, and has just given up all hope, when the winning horse stumbles, and the “Favourite” springs forward like an arrow and wins the race.

Loud shouts welcomed the victor, and the Earl drew a breath of relief, for he had won eighty thousand pounds on this horse, and felt easy as to the rest of the bets he had on the others. During the interval between the races, Mr. Morton approached, and entered the box occupied by Margaret, from whom he received only a cold bow of forced recognition, but the others were

most cordial in their reception. He remained there until the next start, and when all were fixing their attention on the race, he whispered,

“Will you not tell me why you are so cold?”

“We must not speak on the subject, Mr. Morton,” replied Margaret, as she drew nearer to her aunt to prevent any further conversation.

Our friend felt this rebuke, and withdrew on the first opportunity, with the determination never again to intreat this haughty woman to grant him an explanation. This resolution did not, however, continue long in force, but faded before the strong love for her which filled his heart.

The races drew to a close, and the Countess and her party were soon dashing along the road to Windsor, where they arrived in time to catch the train. As they entered the small town, the magnificent Castle of Windsor stood grimly frowning upon them, and Margaret could not but reflect how strange and almost unnatural it

seems to see side by side the relic of an ancient age and the invention of the present century, the railroad! How astonished the old steel-clad knights of the olden time would be if they could but see the innovations of the present! How startled they would be if they could rise from their tombs and look upon steam in its numerous applications! They would believe it to be some witchcraft, some doings of the devil, and cross themselves, muttering over their Ave Marias.

Lord Merwyn was in high glee; he had won all his bets, so as to make a clear hundred thousand pounds. This day had indeed been to him a triumph, of which he was most proud; but what chiefly filled his mind with pleasure was the successful working of his plan against the happiness of Margaret. The Earl had seen Mr. Morton join the Countess of Courtland's party, and the manner of his reception by Miss Wendell had been most gratifying to his lordship, who saw in this a total separation and misunderstanding between the lovers.

It was true that Lord Merwyn had the consent of Mr. Wendell, and that the father would brook no infringement of his commands; but still he knew that "there is many a slip betwixt the cup and the lip," so, acting on this wise thought, he determined "to make surety double sure, and tell pale-hearted fear she lies." To this end he resolved to close up every avenue of communication between the unhappy ones, and this was very easy to do, as the Earl held the only means of intercourse in his own power, and this by letter.

Little did Lord Merwyn suspect that he had aroused a man to exertion who would not leave a stone unturned until he had unravelled the mystery, and forced the truth from out its hiding-place.

"How did you enjoy the day, Margaret?" said the Earl.

"Very much; the racing was very good, was it not?" she replied, in an abstracted voice, without raising her eyes from her lap.

"Very good, everyone says, and for me it was glorious," cried the Earl.

"I am glad that you were successful," rejoined Margaret, coldly.

"I am interrupting some pleasant train of thought, I fear," said his lordship.

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Margaret, rousing herself with an effort.

The conversation between the two soon died out for want of interest on the part of Margaret, who only answered in monosyllables the speeches of her future husband, who, well divining the cause, was not at all displeased at the result.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CONFESSION.

MR. MORTON was seated at his Club the next day, reading over a note, which, according to the date it bore, would seem to have been written some time previously, and which was the one he had received from Mademoiselle de Vermont. In running over in his mind the conduct of Margaret, he recollected that the coolness began on the night of the Opera, and that this French woman had been there; and he now distinctly remembered that Lord Merwyn had endeavoured by covert speech to cast suspicions on him with regard to this same female. The receipt of the note the next day had, he now saw, some significance, although at first he had bestowed no thought

upon it, and gradually, by adding the different circumstances together, Mr. Morton came to the conclusion that in some way this woman, who had signed herself Adrienne, was at the bottom of the mystery, and that she was acting under the directions of the Earl of Merwyn.

This idea having taken firm root in his mind, our friend now set himself to think by what way he could best arrive at the truth of the matter. He knew that this was not an easy thing to do, and he felt that he should find obstacles of every description placed in his path, but he resolved to overcome them if it could be done by mortal, and at least to put forth all his strength to accomplish this desirable end.

After revolving in his brain many plans for carrying out this resolution, he at length thought that the most feasible way would be to call on this Adrienne and draw from her, if possible, the truth. This he hoped might be successful, but feared the result.

It was now ten o'clock, and, considering this to be the best time to find the woman

at home, he called a Hansom, and was soon flying towards his destination. On arriving at St. John's Wood, our friend proceeded at once to Ormond Lodge; he rang the bell, which was answered by the footman. Mr. Morton asked him if his mistress was at home.

"I will see, sir. Who shall I say, if she is in?" asked the footman.

"Here is my card."

Our friend was shown into the drawing-room, while the man proceeded to deliver the card and Mr. Morton's message to a maid-servant, by whom they were conveyed to the fair-haired mistress of the mansion, who was doubtful how to act, fearing as she did to do contrary to the wishes of Lord Merwyn. Would he, she asked herself, wish me to see this gentleman? He was angry at my meeting him on the steamer, but at the same time bid me write and desire him to call. I hardly know what course to pursue, but after all perhaps the best way will be to see the stranger, and then trust to luck about its

pleasing Henri. Having thus decided, she gave the necessary order, and the maid disappeared to do her bidding.

Mademoiselle was in her dressing-robe, which was open at the neck, and gave a glimpse of the snow-white bosom beneath, which rose and fell in soft voluptuous swells, dangerous for the careless eye of man. Hastily glancing in the glass to assure herself that her charms were as radiant as the mirror had reflected some hours ago, she returned to her seat upon the couch, and reclined in her most fascinating position, to await the coming of Mr. Morton.

It is strange that we so quickly forget our own features as to be compelled to confirm our wavering memory so often. Ten minutes' interval, and even less time, serves to make us all at times ready to gaze anew upon our own faces, which always seem so indistinct to us.

In a few moments the door opened, and Mr. Morton was ushered in.

"Good morning! so you have come at last?" said Mademoiselle, extending her hand.

"I have re-considered my refusal, and I am now delighted to be with you," replied Mr. Morton, taking a seat by her side.

"Why did you not come to me in Paris, you forgetful one?"

"I did not forget, I assure you; it was impossible for me to do so."

"Some pretty face, no doubt."

"You are jesting, when you are well aware that no face could be more lovely than the one you carried into France."

"Oh! monsieur, really you flatter me—you do, indeed!" cried Adrienne.

"I never flatter; and the truth could not say less."

"I am glad you think so."

"Lord Merwyn, then, knew about your writing to me?" said Mr. Morton, calmly watching how she would receive this interrogation.

The question was so sudden, that Mademoiselle was thrown entirely off her guard, blushed, and looked very confused. Our friend saw this hesitation, and from it con-

cluded that the shaft had reached its mark.

"No—yes—that is, he does not mind me seeing my friends."

"Come, now, tell me the rest, as I know all about the matter."

"Tell you what?"

"Why Lord Merwyn wished you to write to me?"

"For no reason that I know of," replied Adrienne, thoughtlessly.

"It is very strange that he should wish you to write to me, and give you no reason for so doing. Surely the Earl does not intend insulting me?"

"No, no. I am certain that he does not wish to do anything of the kind."

"As you only asked me to come on his account, there is no use in my remaining!" exclaimed Mr. Morton, rising to go, his countenance expressing much disappointment.

"Do not go so soon. I am sure that I should only have been too delighted to have seen you, even if the Earl had not wished me to write."

"I will stay a little longer, then," said Mr. Morton, who saw some chance of learning more than he had already done.

"You must not say anything to the Earl about my telling you of the letter."

"I promise you that."

"You will excuse me for a moment, will you not?" asked Adrienne, rising to leave the room.

"Certainly, mademoiselle, provided you return soon."

"I shall not be away long," replied the lovely little French woman, as she passed quickly away.

Being left by himself, our friend began looking about the room, at the same time thinking over the conversation he had just had with Mademoiselle de Vermont. At length he began looking at the books on the table, picked up Byron's Poems, and glanced at them for a moment, and, then, laying them down, began examining the rest. Whilst thus occupied, his arm struck by accident a small box in the middle of the table, causing it to turn on its side,

while at the same time the lid flew open, allowing a number of papers to tumble out. Mr. Morton attempted at once to rectify his awkwardness, and in replacing the contents, saw a letter headed, "My darling Adrienne." This, much to his surprise, was in his own handwriting, and had on the outside the word *copy*. Forgetting that he was committing a breach of honour, our friend hastily read it over, and saw at a glance the whole mystery of Margaret's conduct. Not wishing to be caught, he placed everything as it was before, with the exception of the letter, which he retained; and he had not arranged the things a moment before the door opened, and in came the French woman, just too late to witness the spoliation of her forged letter.

"You see, I have not been long away," said Adrienne, throwing herself on the sofa, with a graceful negligence, which, whether by accident or intent we can scarcely say, caused a disarrangement of her dressing-gown, and a bewildering display of

her fair bosom. Adrienne looked at the mishap, and then glanced at Mr. Morton, without endeavouring to draw the robe together; and then her eyes fell on the carpet with a half-playful smile wreathing her rosy lips, displaying her pearly teeth.

There was in all this the well-studied coquetry of the French woman, which sat upon her like nature, timid and blushing; but our friend had other things to think about, and other matters of importance to claim his attention. The soft allurements and wily fascinations of the lovely woman before him were lost on a barren soil, and no fruits grew spontaneously to reward the seeds of love which had been scattered with a lavish hand. The smiles, the glances, and well-heaved sighs were as naught; every blandishment which art could lend to the use of love was tried and failed, flung back by the impenetrable armour of constancy.

We entertain great fears that had many men been seated in this charming little boudoir, with a lovely woman reclining on

a couch before their eyes, languidly voluptuous, and wonderfully beautiful, with rose-leaved lips smiling on them, soft blue eyes glancing beams of love, and hair long, wavy, and golden, falling around her neck of dazzling whiteness, and spreading like a veil of gold across the bosom, we fear that they would not have remained unscathed, but been sorely tempted. But Mr. Morton, fortified by his love for Margaret, carefully kept the conversation confined to ordinary topics, in spite of all Mademoiselle's endeavours to draw him on to a softer theme.

"I came to ask you a question, which I hope you will not refuse to answer at length," said Mr. Morton, fixing his eyes on the French woman.

"That depends on what it is; ladies cannot promise beforehand," replied Adrienne, with an arch smile.

"The question is this—Why did Lord Merwyn send a letter to Miss Wendell purporting to be from me to you?"

Had a thunderbolt struck her, Adrienne

could not have been more astonished and terrified. She grew deadly pale, and then became red. Confused, and at a loss what to say, she dared not trust her tongue, but trembled, hesitated, and feared to lie to a man who knew all.

"You need not fear to speak," continued Mr. Morton, reassuring her with a pleasant smile; "confess, and I will keep you from all harm."

"And if I do not, what then?" asked Adrienne, who began to grow bolder.

"The punishment of a forgery is great—transportation for life!"

At this word transportation, all the courage mustered by Mademoiselle fled, leaving her a prey to terrible fears. What soul that has not already felt the punishment of crime but would shrink with horror from the contemplation of being banished from civilisation to a distant country, disgraced, and forced to mingle with the social dregs of earth. Never before had a thought been given to the consequences of the crime she had so

willingly committed, at the suggestion of her lover. It was now too late to repent, the deed was done, the only thing left was to escape, if possible, from the danger which her conduct had brought upon her. Already her feelings towards her lover began to change, for she saw in him the cause of all that might occur; and knowing little, her imagination naturally shadowed forth the most terrible things, which there seemed to her no chance of evading.

"You are deceived—you must have made a mistake; I know nothing of the Earl's doings," said Adrienne, hesitatingly, not daring to raise her eyes from the floor.

"There is no use in denying it. I have the positive proofs of both his and your connection in the whole affair, and should be very sorry to proceed to extremities; but I shall be compelled to, unless you make a full confession."

Adrienne burst into a flood of tears, threw herself on her knees at his feet, and was begging and imploring Mr. Mor-

ton to have mercy on her, when suddenly she thought of the letter in the box, and sprang to her feet to see if it was still there, as a suspicion of its abstraction flashed across her brain. In another moment all her suspicions were confirmed, and after she had stood motionless for a moment, rooted to the spot with terror, the tide of anger which had been until then repressed burst forth in torrents.

"You, who are a gentleman, to come to a woman and rob her when her back is turned! I cannot find language to express my contempt for one who will commit such an outrage!" cried Adrienne, with a bitter sneer. "In France," she continued, "no one, wishing to be thought a gentleman, would be guilty of such a mean and dishonourable transaction. Fie! for shame on you, to act the part of a common thief!"

She then sank into a chair, exhausted by the intensity of her feelings, and awaited an answer, half maddened with rage and fear.

“You have expressed yourself very freely on my conduct, but would it not be better to glance at your own deeds, and consider whether they are worthy of a woman, or even of a man,” replied Mr. Morton, coldly. “You should have weighed the matter more fully when you forged the original of this letter, seeking, as you did, guided by the friend you love, my ruin. Yes, you were willing to lend yourself to this man for the purpose of condemning me to a life of misery; and then coolly tell me that I am to allow the only chance of safety or escape from the toils you have been instrumental in weaving round my path to slip by! You will find, Mademoiselle, to your cost, that I am not to be trifled with; and much as I dislike adopting any forcible measure against one of your sex, I shall be compelled to do so, unless you at once, without further hesitation, confess all that you have done, or know, with regard to this affair, in which you have played so prominent a part.”

Here Mr. Morton paused for an answer.

The French woman listened with attention to every word, and soon found her courage ebbing away, leaving her a prey to fear.

"I confess all!" cried Adrienne; "but do not tell Lord Merwyn about it, I pray, or I shall be ruined!"

This was said in a piteous voice, and moved the heart of our friend, who felt convinced that she was merely a tool in the hands of the Earl. He also saw and knew that she was not like most women of her class, without a heart, or kindly feelings, but was generous, and as high-minded as a woman of her kind could be.

Our readers must remember that there is a difference between the young girls of the lower class of France and those of England; the former are almost educated in the belief that their destiny is to become the mistress of some man, and therefore do not look upon the accom-

plishment of this idea as a crime; and in holding this opinion, they do not become hardened to vice, as an English girl would, from the knowledge that they have for ever lost the good opinion of the world, including their own self-respect.

"I cannot promise you that, Mademoiselle, but I will avoid doing so, if it is compatible with my endeavours to do away with the consequences which this letter of yours has given rise to."

"You will try and not tell him, won't you? Oh! do not ruin me! What shall I do if he casts me off, without friends, in a strange land!"

Adrienne here again burst into floods of tears.

Mr. Morton was very much moved by her distress, and endeavoured to comfort and console her, which he at length succeeded in doing.

"Do not give way to such grief. Lord Merwyn cannot blame you for what you could not help."

"You do not know him as well as I

do. He is blind to reason, and will believe that I have betrayed him to you. Oh! sir, you will try and conceal it from the Earl, and I will do anything you wish me to, no matter what it is, but do not tell, if you can help it!" said Adrienne, imploringly, looking wistfully through the mist of tears which hung like a veil before her eyes. "Only say what I can do, and I am willing to do all that you ask."

"What I wish you to do is, to sign a written confession of both your and Lord Merwyn's participation in this conspiracy against the happiness of myself and the lady, to whom you, or the Earl, sent the original of this letter. Will you do that?"

"Yes."

"Did his lordship ever tell you why he wished to make this lady jealous of me?"

"No, never. He told me nothing more than that he wished me to do so, and these things I did at his command; that is all I know concerning the matter."

"Were you not aware that the lady in question is engaged to the Earl, but that she loves me?"

"He engaged!" cried Adrienne, passionately, as a sharp pain shot through her heart. "But why should I complain? I have no rights; I am a plaything, to be toyed with at pleasure, and cast aside at will."

"Do not give yourself unnecessary uneasiness; he will love you as much with a wife as without one."

"Do you think so?" asked Adrienne, a ray of hope springing into her blue eyes, from which now and then a silvery tear would drop.

"I must not stay much longer, and I will, if you will have some writing materials brought, draw up a short confession for you to sign."

Mademoiselle herself went to fetch them, and in a few minutes the confession was drawn up to Mr. Morton's satisfaction, who then placed it before Adrienne to read and sign. The following is the copy:—

"I, Adrienne de Vermont, do, without compulsion, make confession of my complicity with the Earl of Merwyn to endeavour to injure Mr. Morton in the eyes of a friend in whose esteem and love he wishes to hold a high place. I here freely and fully state that the Earl of Merwyn did plan a conspiracy against the good name of the said Mr. Morton, and the means used by which his lordship hoped to attain a successful result were as follows: firstly, the Earl directed me to request the presence of Mr. Morton at my house, that he, the Earl of Merwyn might be able to circulate the report of such a visit to the detriment of Mr. Morton, and thus injure him in the regard of the above-mentioned friend. Failing in this, Lord Merwyn induced me to forge a letter in the handwriting of Mr. Morton, purporting to come from him to me, but inclosed by mistake apparently in the wrong envelope, and thus sent to Miss Wendell, who has been duped by this cunning artifice of his lordship.

"ADRIENNE DE VERMONT."

Some of the things mentioned in the above confession were first drawn from Mademoiselle by Mr. Morton, who managed, by skilfully turning his questions, to gain a full and clear knowledge of all that had occurred, and who was now armed with a formidable weapon, a document which his antagonist could not deny or even attempt to disprove, so conclusive were the proofs he had in his possession. This was an important step gained in the right direction; but how was he to make his present success of any use, as writing did no good, only resulting in his receiving his own letter back unopened, and he could not by any means contrive to have a moment's speech with Margaret, for the purpose of explaining away the delusion under which she was labouring? This was a perplexing consideration, but our friend dismissed it just now for a more fitting opportunity, and turned his attention to Adrienne, who had resigned the paper without the least hesitation, and who sat sad and silent, dismayed at the unpleasant condition of her affairs, and scarcely know-

ing what to think or do, so uncertain did she feel as to the end of all this scene.

Mr. Morton at length interrupted her meditations by saying,

“You will, I hope, excuse any rudeness on my part, as I did no more than I was obliged to do for my own protection; and let me add, that if you should find your worst anticipations realized, you will find a friend by applying to me.”

“Thanks, thanks, Monsieur; you are very kind, after all that I have done against you,” cried Adrienne, much moved by Mr. Morton’s kindness.

Mr. Morton now arose, folded up the confession, which he placed in his pocket, and then bade Mademoiselle adieu.

Adrienne, after the departure of her visitor, threw herself upon the couch to consider, as well as her agitation would allow, as to the best means of meeting her lover; and, after some hesitation, arrived at the conclusion that the best way for her would be to confess all that had taken place during her interview with Mr. Morton.

That very evening did Lord Merwyn learn from the lips of his mistress the full account of Mr. Morton's visit; and when he had done so, his fury and rage were fearful to contemplate. He cursed the intruder, he cursed his mistress, and he cursed himself in the wild paroxysm of his anger, before which Adrienne trembled like an aspen leaf. To the Earl's reproaches for admitting Mr. Morton, she replied that it was done to please him, and brought to his memory his desire for her to invite Mr. Morton to her house. This the Earl could not deny, and saw that the fault lay with him in not telling Adrienne that there no longer existed any need for Mr. Morton's coming. Through this neglect, indeed, arose the whole mischief.

When his lordship learned about the letter and confession, he thought all was lost, but his cunning came to his assistance, and his first step was at once to give orders for the removal of his mistress to another house, where she would be secure from the visits of Mr. Morton, who would in all pro-

bability proceed further in the matter, and might occasion him much annoyance and even serious trouble. Having made all necessary arrangements for the transfer of Adrienne to another place, the Earl departed.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE STORMY INTERVIEW.

LORD MERWYN that very evening entered the Club and inquired whether Mr. Morton were there; learning that he was, the Earl at once entered the smoking-room, and found our friend by himself smoking and reading the *Times*, which he had not had an opportunity of doing before during the day. As Lord Merwyn entered, Mr. Morton raised his eyes from the paper, glanced towards the new comer, nodded his head, and then continued reading.

"May I have the pleasure of a few minutes' conversation with you?" said the Earl, in a bland tone.

"Certainly, if you wish it," replied Mr. Morton, in a courteous manner.

"You thought fit to-day to call upon Mademoiselle de Vermont?"

"Your mistress?" interrupted Mr. Morton.

"Yes, my mistress."

"It is as well, my lord, that we should understand each other as we go on," said Mr. Morton.

"I do not see that her being my mistress has anything to do with it."

"Very much, I assure you, there is nothing of more moment," replied Mr. Morton, quietly.

"You trifle with me, sir," cried the Earl, scarcely able to repress his rage.

"Not at all, I should be very sorry to trifle with the Earl of Merwyn."

"As I began to say, you called on my mistress and insulted her by conduct unbecoming a gentleman. I demand of you, by what right you dared to enter my house?"

"Simply by your invitation! I could not have had a better right."

"That, sir, is false. I never wished you, nor did I ever ask you to enter the house,

which you have made the scene of an unpardonable outrage."

"The written invitation I received may not be in your hand-writing, but it was nevertheless dictated and approved of by you."

"That is merely your own assertion, which cannot be proved."

Mr. Morton saw no use in bringing in the name of Mademoiselle, as it would have no effect on the Earl, so he contented himself with merely saying that, whatever his lordship might think fit to say upon the subject, he, Mr. Morton, should consider that he held the legitimate invitation from him.

"Among other outrages you committed during your visit, you basely purloined a letter in the possession of Mademoiselle de Vermont, of which I now demand the restitution," exclaimed the Earl.

"You may make your mind easy on that subject, as I tell you plainly that I intend keeping it in my possession; and, moreover, that I am astonished at your having the

audacity even to mention it, after what has occurred. Do not press me to say any more," said Mr. Morton, with a significant look.

"You forget to whom you speak," haughtily replied the Earl.

"Not for a moment; I am well aware who you are, but you are ignorant who I am. I shall not, however, allow you to continue so much longer."

"I shall be most happy to have a more thorough knowledge of Mr. Morton, but I hope that it will be more to his credit than that which I already know of him. "You have," continued the Earl, "endeavoured to alienate from me the love of my intended wife, which is an action in itself unpardonable; and this day you have grievously insulted me by stealing (I cannot use a softer term) a letter from my house, and then forcing an unprotected woman to sign a paper drawn up by your own hand."

"In the first instance, your intended wife does not, nor did she ever entertain for you feelings other than those of aver-

sion amounting to hatred; and, in the second place, you have endeavoured to add misery to misery by inducing her, by a lie as false as your own heart, to believe in a falsehood. Your last accusation is in some degree true, but I deny that I did wrong in seizing upon a forgery intended and used for my injury, nor did I force your mistress to sign anything but what both you and she know to be true and just."

"No doubt you consider your game is about to be crowned with success, but allow me to say that you are no nearer the end than you were before this day's work, so you might have spared yourself the trouble," said the Earl, coldly and distantly.

"We shall see, my lord, who will win in the long run."

"What good will the papers you have do you, as all communication with Miss Wendell is at an end; and even should any letter from you reach her, I should at once disprove your documents, by telling her that the copy you hold was written by yourself, and that the confession was an arrangement

between you and your mistress, Adrienne de Vermont, who will corroborate all that I state."

Mr. Morton was taken aback by the cool villany of the Earl, and made no reply.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Lord Merwyn, "you are caught in your own trap."

"Fiend! you are a greater scoundrel than I took you for," exclaimed Mr. Morton.

"I thank you for the compliment; it is so delicately paid that the most modest man could not take offence. Ha! ha! ha! you should be more careful in your endeavours for the future, or else you will be getting into difficulties that will some day be more than you can bear up against."

"I shall never meet a more unprincipled wretch than the man who stands before me."

"If I were not a peaceably-inclined person, I should demand satisfaction; but I have pity for the indiscretions of foolish knight-errants, so you are safe, unless you should think fit to commit any further

breach of decency and courtesy towards me."

"You are generous! I will not detain your lordship any longer," said Mr. Morton, rising, with a strange fire gleaming in his eyes, that made the Earl feel somewhat awed.

"For the last time, will you yield up the letter and confession?" demanded Lord Merwyn.

"I will not."

"You will rue this day's work!" cried the Earl, as he turned to leave the room.

In another moment Mr. Morton was alone.

"This man is truly the most unmitigated scoundrel I ever met; and to make his evil more effective, adds to his rascality a mind of great genius, which will not easily succumb to my endeavours. Indeed, I should greatly fear for the success of my undertaking, if I had not overcome greater difficulties before. No doubt he has removed this French mistress of his to a place which will remain unknown to me;

and that may be unpleasant for me, if the Earl should act as he has said he will do in reference to Margaret. I must be on my guard, or else this fellow will be too much for me."

CHAPTER XV.

THE RECONCILIATION.

IT was a beautiful day in June, soft, warm, and joyful, just the one on which to enjoy a walk in the pleasant gardens of Kensington; and so thought Mr. Morton, as he wandered up and down the long avenues of trees, halting now and then to witness the sports of some merry group of children.

Mr. Morton had been there for an hour, when he resolved to bend his steps towards Rotten Row, to watch the throngs of people who frequent that rendezvous of fashion and gaiety.

As Mr. Morton, however, was about to leave, his eye caught a glimpse of a figure in the distance, which made his heart leap with joy, for it was Margaret walking with Lady Catherine and the little

girl's governess. Stepping on one side, behind the shelter of a large tree, he awaited their approach ; and when they arrived opposite to where he stood, Mr. Morton stepped forward, bowed to Margaret, and shook hands with Lady Catherine, who was delighted to see him, having taken a great fancy to him. The governess was some little distance behind, and Mr. Morton took this opportunity of speaking, as Lady Catherine ran back to tell the governess of the new-comer.

"Miss Wendell, for the last time I entreat you to grant me but five minutes, to explain away the mystery which has enveloped us for so long a time?"

"I cannot consent ; your conduct has been too bad ever to allow me to permit any intercourse between us," replied Margaret.

"Alas ! I see that you are determined to sacrifice our happiness to a mere lie, unworthy to be believed by anyone who really loved. Grant me five short minutes, and I will then never again cross your

path, or cause you the least annoyance by my presence?"

The heart of Margaret was softened by the imploring look of her lover, and only needed an excuse to yield. At this moment the governess and the child joined them, rendering all further conversation impossible; and Mr. Morton, who thought all was at an end, threw a glance at Margaret so full of sadness and suffering, as completely to melt the yielding heart.

"You may walk on, Miss Brown, with Lady Catherine, and we will follow."

The governess did as she was told, and Mr. Morton gave Margaret such a look of grateful love, as well repaid her for the concession; besides which, she was herself glad to bring the matter to some end, as she was sick and tired of the terrible anxiety and heart-rending uncertainty of the last few weeks, and was not even without some faint hope that something more pleasant might grow out of this interview, although she feared to give credence to her thoughts, so fully convinced was she that happiness was not to be her lot.

"You are very kind thus to accede to my wishes. I feared, and indeed expected that you would refuse all my prayers," said Mr. Morton.

"Remember that you have but five minutes," said Margaret coldly.

"Your demeanour reminds me of it too well."

"There is good reason for my conduct."

"Now for my explanation. You received a letter addressed to you in my hand-writing, did you not?" he said.

"I did."

"The letter was headed, 'My darling Adrienne,' and signed by me?"

"It was."

"You, of course, read the epistle, and from that time dated your coldness."

"The cause was sufficient. I pray that you will let the explanation be as short as possible, as the subject is most displeasing to me," said Margaret.

"You shall be obeyed. No doubt you believe that I had made a mistake, and enclosed the wrong letter in the envelope directed to you?"

"Such I did, and do believe to be the case," replied Margaret, less coldly than before.

"I knew it, but you should have been less willing to give credit to such things."

"What could have been a stronger proof than a letter in your own writing?"

"It was not my writing."

"Not yours!" cried Margaret in amazement, "whose was it then?"

"That of the mistress of your intended husband; she at his command forged the letter."

"Wretch! to do such a thing!" exclaimed Margaret.

"He wished to separate us, thereby making himself more sure of you."

"I can hardly credit anything half so horrible. How did you discover the cause of my actions?"

"My suspicions were aroused by recollecting that your coldness commenced from that evening at the Opera, and by the fact that I received a note from this Adrienne, the next day, desiring me to call. I refused,

thinking nothing of it at the time ; but since that I became convinced that this woman was in some way connected with the cause of your displeasure towards me, and resolved, if possible, to discover it. Acting on this determination, I called one day on Mademoiselle de Vermont ; from her I learned, by a thoughtless answer, that the note to me had been dictated by Lord Merwyn ; and this confirmed my suspicion. During my visit, my hostess left the room for a short time, and during her absence I by accident upset a box, from which the copy of the letter sent to you rolled out before my eyes. I, seeing my own writing, naturally glanced over its contents, and learned the whole of the plot which was being played against our happiness. On the return of Adrienne, I forced her to write a confession, which I have with me, to satisfy you of my innocence, which, I trust, you will, if satisfied, never again doubt."

Margaret had been listening to her lover's speech with the deepest interest,

and now said: "I fear that I have been very wrong in so hastily believing you unfaithful. The suspicion was agony—another such would kill me."

"Here is the letter, and here the confession; read them, and tell me if I am forgiven."

Saying this, Mr. Morton handed her the two papers which he drew from his pocket, and which Margaret took and read with eagerness. When she had finished, she threw on her lover a look which amply repaid him for all his sufferings.

"You will forgive me?"

"Forgive you? No! You must forgive me; I am the one who has sinned, and you the one who has been injured," exclaimed Margaret as she wiped away a tear, which hung glistening from her eyelashes like a diamond.

"I am again happy, for you do not believe anything against me, darling love, do you?"

"No"—and she murmured a name which

was lost on the wind, which bore it no further than the eager ears of the fond and happy lover; a soft whispered word, which was as a well of never-dying love, that filled the soul of Mr. Morton with unspeakable delight. Joy shone from his eyes; new life seemed to animate his whole being, and all the gloomy past was now forgotten in the present pleasure.

“What a terrible man Lord Merwyn is!” exclaimed Margaret, shuddering at the thought of the past. “He would not spare me. What would my fate be if I were once in his power! Why my father should be so blind, I cannot imagine.”

“Your father, dearest Margaret, has only seen the bright side of the Earl’s character; nor would he believe the other to be true, so fully has he given his esteem and regard to this man, who is so unworthy of his friendship, and much less worthy the possession of his dearest treasure. Does your aunt, Lady Courtland, know of our misunderstanding?”

"No, she does not ; she often speaks about your not coming to the house as much as you used to. Frances, indeed, suspected that something had occurred ; but I would never yield to her entreaties, to confide in her—I could not."

Here Margaret hesitated and blushed.

"Could not do what, dearest?" he said.

"You will think me foolish," she answered.

"Foolish ! why should I?" he rejoined.

"Don't laugh at me, and I will tell you," she replied.

"I promise."

"Well, then, I could not—I could not—say anything against you to anyone, and have them speak ill of you," she said.

"You are a darling pet ; I shall love you more and more, until I set you up as an idol to worship."

"You must not do that, it would be wicked, and you would be punished by having your idol taken from you. What would you do then?" she asked.

"Be the most unhappy wretch in christen-

dom ! Do not mention so fearful a subject !" cried Mr. Morton.

" I must now really bid you good-bye, as it is growing late, and I should have been home half an hour ago !" exclaimed Margaret, as she glanced at her watch.

" Good-bye, darling !" cried Mr. Morton, as he pressed her willing hand with more than usual warmth ; " may this be the last of our misunderstandings."

" Good-bye," was the soft, sweet response.

When Margaret reached her room, she sat down and gave way to a dream of happiness, through the brightness of which, like a falling star, shot now and then a tear. Many were the reproaches she gave herself, for allowing her suspicion to rest so long on her lover's fidelity, without permitting him to explain ; and she could only console herself by resolving that she would never again be jealous, let what might occur to throw doubt on his constancy. But, alas ! we, and those of our readers who have attained our own mature age, know too well that there is ever a fund of suspicion in the heart of every true woman.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DETECTIVE.

ON the 20th of June, 18—, Thomas Williams was arraigned at the bar of the Old Bailey, to answer to the charge of murder committed on the body of his wife, Sarah Williams, on the night of the 18th of May, 18—. The criminal pleaded guilty, and threw himself on the mercy of the court. The evidence was examined; and the jury, after having been charged by the judge, in about five minutes returned a verdict of Guilty. After the judge had pronounced the sentence, the prisoner was conducted back to his cell; and it was stated in the papers that the prisoner had made a confession of a former

crime, committed at the instigation of a person in high life, in the hope of having his present sentence reversed.

This came at once under the eye of Lord Merwyn, and gave him far other than pleasant feelings ; but still he believed, and felt almost certain, that the affair could not be traced to him, so well had he broken off all connection between the man who arrived with a child at Jermyn Street, and the one who carried the child to Mrs. Mills, at Camden Town.

The authorities at once ordered an examination of the premises where Williams said that the murder had been committed ; and as detectives are seldom so dull as not to be able to find evidence in support of their own belief, a *primâ facie* case was made out to the satisfaction of the magistrates, that a murder had been committed, and the case was placed in the hands of able detectives to trace out the employer of Williams, who described him as a man rather under the middle height, very dark and handsome, with a

black moustache and a full beard. The Earl saw that the position was a dangerous one, but relied on his elevated position to shelter him from suspicion.

The search went on, but stopped at the door of the lodgings in Jermyn Street, and day by day wore away without any clue to the crime. The prisoner himself, who heard daily of the progress made, began to despair of success, when a cabman gave information that he had driven a gentleman, answering to the description, and a little child, from Piccadilly to Camden Town. Acting on this new light, the detectives resumed their search, but only succeeded in learning that a woman with some little children had left one of the houses some few days previously; and when they went on this new trail, found themselves where they were before—at fault.

To explain this, we must tell the reader that Lord Merwyn, fearing that this might be the result, had ventured to the house of Mrs. Mills, and taken her and the children, under some plausible pretext, to the little village

of Wandsworth, and provided them with lodgings there.

The principal detective who was on the murderer's track was a tall, thin man, with long brown hair, broad, high forehead, and a restless grey eye, which seemed to drop down into one's very soul, 'as though it were a hook ready to drag out the secret, if any there were; and altogether, in fact, one of those men whom Nature has formed in the likeness of animals, whose province it is to track their prey with blood-thirsty patience, and to drop down upon unawares.

This detective had watched the case from the beginning, with the instinctive feeling that something would in time come out of it, and, like a well-trained bloodhound, he had from the first gone steadily to work. He had not attempted to spring at once to where the game might be, but had slowly beaten every inch of ground as he passed over it, not leaving any loop-hole of escape. Thus had he gone from the confession to the scene of the supposed murder, and from

there had turned his footsteps to the lodgings in Jermyn Street, where the thread was broken.

James Strong did not at once exhaust his energies by useless exertions, but remained quiet until some new light was thrown on the mystery by the intelligence of the cabman. Our detective then resumed the trace, and by careful inquiry convinced himself that the woman who had left the house at Camden Town was in some way connected with the affair.

Strong still continued his search, without much success; sometimes he would hear of a woman with young children having arrived at a place on the same day that Mrs. Mills left London, and he would at once fasten on this new scent, only to find, after much trouble, that there was nothing to be discovered. Several times did the same thing occur, but at length he came upon the track of Mrs. Mills in Wandsworth, and from her discovered that which he wished.

The interview between Mr. Strong and

Mrs. Mills came about in this manner : The detective had learned by accident that on the day of the disappearance of the woman from London, one answering to her description had gone by rail to Wandsworth; he followed this up, and soon came upon her. Not wishing to frighten the game, he called at her house, and was received by the unsuspecting woman in the little drawing-room.

"You wished to see me?" said Mrs. Mills, as she entered the room.

"Yes, I have come from London, sent by the gentleman who placed a child under your care some few months ago; his name is Mr.—Mr. Smith—that is it, I am very bad at remembering names. Yours is Mrs. Mills, is it not?" said the detective, blandly.

"Yes, that is my name; but Mr. Jones is the gentleman who brought the child."

"Jones! Jones! that is the name; why, I shall forget my own next!" cried Strong, perfectly concealing his satisfaction.

"This woman," thought he to himself,

"knows nothing about the murder, or else she would be more on her guard."

"Where is the little man Henry—would you mind my seeing him? Mr. Jones wished me to let him know, as he could not come himself, how the child was looking."

Mrs. Mills, proud of her charge, at once went for the little boy, leaving the detective to chuckle to himself over the progress of his plan. The moment the door re-opened he was the same bland, smiling, good-natured man that Mrs. Mills first saw.

"Come to me, my little man," exclaimed Strong, as the little boy entered the room, clinging on to the dress of his new friend.

The child held back diffidently, nor would he, until carried to the man, stop trying to escape. The boy answered the description given of the child of the woman supposed to have been murdered. So far so good; the links of the chain were complete so far. It now remained to ferret out who this Mr. Smith, alias Mr. Jones, really was.

After making many remarks on the child,

the detective asked Mrs. Mills if she had heard of the late murder which had been committed, and over which there hung such a shroud of impenetrable mystery.

"I have heard something about it, but I never care for these things, so I don't read them," replied Mrs. Mills.

Mr. Strong here gave her a full and detailed account of the whole transaction. During his recital she became somewhat agitated, and at the close of it said,

"How very strange!"

"What is strange?" interrogated Strong.

"Why, that Mr. Jones should have brought this little one to me the next day after the murder."

"It was on, then, the day that Mr. Smith disappeared from Jermyn Street?" added the detective.

"It was. I have always thought that there was something strange in the conduct of Mr. Jones; but you don't think that he and Mr. Smith are one and the same, do you?" asked Mrs. Mills, trembling with excitement.

"That is as it may be, but what I have

to do is to search all your things and take charge of you and the child until the mystery is cleared up."

"What will become of my children if I am taken from them?" almost gasped the frightened woman.

"They will be all right. Calm yourself."

"I hope, sir, that this may not prove true," sobbed Mrs. Mills, whose heart was ready to break at the very thought of being in any way connected with such a horrible crime. Her disordered imagination pictured to her all sorts of punishments, until she really believed herself to be the guilty one.

"I suppose that the child had clothes when he was brought to you?" inquired Mr. Strong.

"He had."

"Were there any letters, photographs, or anything of importance among them?"

"Nothing in the clothes, but there was hung round his neck a locket, with the miniatures of a gentleman and a lady."

"Where is it now?" asked the detective quickly.

"It is round his neck."

Mr. Strong at once looked for the locket, and on examining it he found on one side the likeness of a lady about twenty, with fair hair, large blue eyes, and fair complexion; and on the other side a portrait of the Earl of Merwyn, which the detective at once recognised as answering to the description of the man described by Williams.

To account for the existence of this locket, we must go back in time until we again find ourselves in the chamber of Florence Mordaunt, the secret wife of the Earl of Merwyn, at the old deserted house in the country, where the fatal tragedy was supposed to have occurred. Florence had, before resigning her boy to the care of Mrs. Williams, taken the locket from her own neck, and hung it round that of her son; in this way did it find itself with the boy at Mrs. Mills'.

"I must take possession of this," said the detective, putting the locket in his pocket; "and now we must look at the child's clothes."

The woman conducted him to her own bedroom, where the things were kept, but nothing more of importance was found, so they returned to the drawing-room.

"Did Mr. Jones engage you some time before he brought the child?" asked Mr. Strong.

"About a fortnight," was the reply.

"Did he say anything about the child, or give any reason why he placed him in your charge?"

"He said that the boy's mother had just died; and it seemed likely, indeed, for the little one kept constantly calling for his mamma."

"Did Mr. Jones appear at all affected by the child's grief?" asked the detective.

"It seemed to distress him very much," said Mrs. Mills.

"Now tell me what was he to give you for the trouble of bringing up the child?"

When the woman had informed him of the particulars, the detective whistled, and exclaimed—

"He must be some swell, or else he

would never have given as much as that. No man, no matter how rich he might be, if he had made the money, would have given more than was necessary for the boy's support."

"He looked like a thorough gentleman," said the woman.

"Maybe he is some great nobleman," silently reflected the detective, "who married beneath his station, and murdered the poor girl that he might marry some one else. Such things do happen among the biggest wigs; I have known some queer cases in my day."

Mr. Strong here arose, went to the door, and called a man who had been for some time standing on the opposite side of the street.

"How did you find everything?" asked the man as he approached.

"All right, I am on the right track at last; the woman is the one who left Camden Town, and she has the child; the proofs could not be better. You keep watch until I return."

That very afternoon a couple of

policemen conveyed Mrs. Mills and her children to a place of security, to await the issue of the search for the murderer.

The next morning the journals were full of the discovery, and anticipated an early capture of the culprit, on the ground of the finding round the little boy's neck the locket containing the miniature of the lady and gentleman.

The Earl of Merwyn had read all this intelligence with the feverish excitement of a gambler, who has staked his all, and sees his chance of success growing less and less. For some days past he had remained in the house as much as possible, going out mostly at night. Lady Harriet had noticed the paleness, and evident look of anxiety hanging about her son; but could not draw from him any explanation.

The 6th of July had been appointed as the day for the marriage of the Earl with Margaret Wendell, and there were now only two days of terrible anxiety to be passed, before the former could claim

his wife, and leave for a place of safety, until the storm had blown over. Minutes seemed to the waiting one as hours; never before had time drawn itself out so slowly—it seemed to fly with leaden wings. The news of the discovery of the miniatures almost drove the Earl wild, and at one time he determined to leave the country immediately for the Continent, without waiting for Margaret, as every delay might prove dangerous. But then, again, he resolved to remain until he could carry away the prize for which he had stained his hands with blood, and this, not only for the sake of the prize itself, but to prevent its falling into the hands of his hated rival.

“No! no!” muttered he to himself, “I will not, I cannot yield her up; I must stay and abide the consequences.”

What would he not have given if by a word he could have recalled Florence to life! But, alas! it was now too late—nothing could bring her back; his mortal words could not reach beyond the awful

portals of the tomb. In their death-like silence the tiny voice of man was lost.

In vain did the Earl endeavour to drown the maddening thought in oblivion; in vain did he strive to drive it from his bewildered brain; it would not be drowned, it would not be driven away, but would force itself ever more strongly upon his heated imagination, as time rolled on in its course.

On the night of the 3rd of July, Lord Merwyn spent the evening at Lady Courtland's, where the principal topic of conversation was the mysterious murder.

"Did you read this morning's account of the discovery of the woman and child who left Camden Town the other day?" said Lady Courtland.

"I did," answered the Earl.

"The whole thing is considered to be satisfactory so far, and I hope they will succeed in catching the villain, for he must be a dreadful man!" cried Margaret.

"Horrid wretch! hanging is too good for him," exclaimed Lady Frances.

"Hanging, I should think, was bad enough for any crime. Just imagine the disgrace," said Lord Merwyn.

"What could disgrace such a horrid creature, who would kill his wife in cold blood?" rejoined Lady Frances.

"He will be most certainly brought to justice," said Lady Courtland.

"One cannot tell, as so many crimes escape detection," replied Lord Merwyn.

"I feel a certain conviction that this murderer will be caught," exclaimed Lady Frances.

"I do hope that he will," cried Margaret.

"Do you know that the description of the murderer is very much like the Earl," said Lady Courtland, looking at Lord Merwyn.

"Do you think so?" replied the Earl, with a smile and a bow, and without evincing the least discomposure.

"It would be rather awkward if you should be arrested by mistake," said Lady Frances.

"How dreadful!" cried Margaret.

Lord Merwyn was a bold man, and one who did not give way before trifles, but this conversation made him inwardly feel the chill of death, although his face bore the composure of happy innocence; and indeed the calm manner in which they all talked about hanging him was by no means re-assuring; and it was not long before, pleading an engagement, he bade them all good evening, and proceeded to his own house, tired and sick of constantly hearing of the crime which he had committed. The crisis seemed to be coming, and would be upon him soon, but he trusted that the storm would hold off until the wedding had taken place, and safely away from danger.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE WARNING.

MOST of next day was spent by the Earl in considering whether there were any probability of the storm holding off until he had gained Margaret for his bride. Time hung heavily, and as the weary hours rolled slowly on, he sighed to think the day of happiness and safety so far distant. Towards evening he received an anonymous letter; its contents were as follows:—

“Fly at once, or else it may be too late; to-morrow’s sun may rise on you a prisoner.”

There was no signature to the epistle; from whom it could come the Earl could not imagine, but it was evident that who-

ever wrote it must know of his connection with the murder, and be aware of his danger.

The reception of this letter threw Lord Merwyn into a state of feverish excitement, from which he found it impossible to withdraw himself during the rest of the evening. It filled his mind with a world of troubled thoughts, and in the midst of them all reigned paramount the idea that it must be the work of Mr. Morton, and was an attempt on the part of the man he hated to induce him to fly from the woman he loved. To make his security more certain, the Earl at once proceeded to the house of his mistress to spend the night.

It was about ten o'clock when he arrived at the house to which Adrienne had removed on the day after her interview with Mr. Morton. Mademoiselle was pleased to see her lover again, as it was now some time since he had been with her.

"Good evening, Henri dear," exclaimed Adrienne in her broken English, as the Earl of Merwyn entered the room.

The Earl kissed her, and sat down in a chair without speaking a word.

Adrienne looked at him in silence for some minutes, fearing to interrupt his reverie, as his temper when disturbed was far from being pleasant. Her curiosity at length, however, overcame her fear, and she prepared herself to speak, but again hesitated, as she saw the gloom on his brow. The room was but faintly lighted with a pair of candles on the mantelpiece, so that where the Earl sat the shadows, hovering about him, gave an unearthly appearance to his face. This had rather the effect of alarming Adrienne, as she gazed on the troubled features of the nobleman; and at length, rising from her chair, she drew close to the Earl, and placed her hand upon his shoulder. But although Lord Merwyn glanced up for an instant with a nervous start, as soon as he saw that it was his mistress he resumed his train of unpleasant thoughts—for unpleasant they must have been, judging from his anxious and unsettled look.

"You are unhappy to-night, *mon chér*," said Adrienne.

"Pray leave me alone," replied the Earl doggedly.

"Will you not tell me why you are so distressed?" she rejoined.

"Tell you? Place myself——" Here he paused, and gazed wildly at Mademoiselle, and then he buried his head in his hands.

"Do not be so sad, dear Henri, you need not fear me."

"Fear you! Who said I feared anyone? But, there, there! Don't cry! I am very anxious about something, and you must not mind what I say. Do you hear, my pet?" cried the Earl.

"Do you not wish me to talk to you?" asked Adrienne sadly.

"Talk to me? Yes, talk to me, talk to me, or I shall go mad!" cried he, springing from his seat, and pacing up and down the room.

Adrienne drew back from him in alarm, fearing that he was becoming crazed, so strange did he seem, and so wildly bright

did his eyes gleam with unnatural fire. But after a few moments the paroxysm passed off, and the Earl, with a sad attempt at a smile, said—

“Do not mind me Adrienne, I would not harm one hair of gold upon your head; but bear with me patiently, as I am the most wretched of men. If hell itself should yawn before me, I would jump into it, to escape the dangers and horrors of the present.”

Saying this, the Earl sank into his seat, and once more buried his head in his hands.

“Do not give way to this grief, but tell me what has occurred to give you such a fearful thought,” exclaimed his companion, with alarm, astonishment, and pity depicted on every lineament of her face. “You terrify me,” she continued; “you terrify me by your extraordinary and inexplicable words. When last I saw you, everything seemed to be going on with you in the pleasantest manner. What can have happened to make you thus miserable?” said his mistress imploringly.

"There is some terrible and awful misfortune hanging over my life, which throws a cloud around all that the world holds dear to me. I am unhappy, wretched, and maddened by a despair, through which you must not try to see."

"Is it caused by anything I did?" asked Adrienne timidly.

"What do you mean, by anything that you did?" said Lord Merwyn.

"About—about Mr. Morton's calling on me that day and taking the letter," was the reply.

"Do not mention that man's name again—the very sound of it fills me with hate. I could tear him limb from limb for having dared to cross my path!" exclaimed the Earl, who then fell into a train of thought, carrying on in his own mind the speech which he had abruptly terminated. "Somehow the thought of this man has a strange influence upon me; he seems to haunt me; nothing can drive the fellow's image from my mind. It is strange that he should be thus uppermost in my thoughts; but away with

these things, or else I shall become a fit subject for a lunatic asylum, instead of a prison. Prison—ah! Horrible thought, that I, the proud Earl of Merwyn, should be tried for murder, convicted, and sentenced to be hanged—to be led out before the idle, gaping, and fiendish multitude—to be punished like any common criminal. By heaven, it shall never be said that the noble house of Hargreave had one of its members hanged! Disgrace! disgrace! lasting and never-ending, shall never darken the lustre of its ancient escutcheon! No! If I am taken, there is that about me which will send my soul on its downward journey without the hangman's aid."

Here a fiendish smile came over his face, and he turned to where Adrienne was seated, gazing on him with sad and mournful looks.

"Come, come, my pet, you must not mind me, for I am out of sorts to-night; but come here and cheer me up."

The French woman did as she was requested, and was soon seated by his side, endeavouring to drive away the clouds

which had gathered around his brow ; and she succeeded in doing this so well, apparently, that in less than an hour the Earl was laughing and chatting with his accustomed equanimity.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE FLIGHT.

THE next day found Mr. Strong on the look-out. As yet he had not gained any definite knowledge of the real perpetrator of the deed, though, from some little things which he had gathered together, he looked with some suspicion on the house of the Earl of Merwyn in Portman Square. In fact, his assistant had, the day before, on passing the mansion, seen a gentleman there exactly answering to the description of the man who was supposed to have committed the deed.

Acting on the communication of his assistant, Strong at once directed his steps towards the residence suspected of containing a criminal. He had reasons for consi-

dering that the culprit was a man of position, if not of rank, so he was not deterred from his investigation when he learned that the mansion belonged to the Earl of Merwyn; but not wishing to act without cause, he did not at once proceed to any overt act, but placed his companion to keep guard over the house, with orders to track the man if he came out.

Mr. Strong could not have placed one more capable of this duty than George Grey, who, although only about twenty years of age, had gone through more of life than many a man of eighty, and had seen the ups and downs of life in all its varied forms. He was the son of a farmer, and had lived on the estate of Sir Harold Hargreave, but ran away from home at an early age, and went to Australia, from whence he had returned some two years since, with but little money, but a stock of experience which enabled him to become an efficient assistant to Mr. Strong.

George had seen but little of his landlord's youngest son, and was not aware that

•

he and the Earl of Merwyn were one and the same person ; and, indeed, had he known it, there would have arisen some compunctions in his breast with respect to his being the means of bringing a member of a family he truly liked to punishment.

On his way from Portman Square the night before, he had met Mr. Morton, whom he had known in Australia, and who had saved his life from the hand of a drunken native, who attempted to beat him to death with a club.

"Is that you, George?" said Morton, as he saw the young man in the street.

"It is, Mr. Morton, and I'm so glad to see you ; you are very kind to remember me, sir," answered George.

"How long have you been back from Australia?" asked Mr. Morton.

"About two years now," replied the young man.

"Have you any employment?"

"I am with a Mr. Strong," said George.

"The detective?"

"Yes."

"Do you like the business?" asked our friend.

"Not very much; I hate watching people."

"Is not your master on the track of the mysterious murderer?" inquired Mr. Morton.

"He is, sir, and hard work it has been, but I think we are getting on better now," answered George.

"I am glad to hear that; I hope you will have success," rejoined Mr. Morton.

Here George thought he had gone too far, and began to be more reserved in his communications; but whilst our friend noticed the change, he was not the less determined to discover all that the young man knew about the affair, so he at once said,

"Then you have found out who did the crime; was it you or your master that succeeded in making the discovery?"

"We have not either of us made out for positive who the person is," replied the young man.

"But you suspect? now come, tell me

who it is? You need not fear to confide in me."

"I do not fear, but—I—"

"Come, no more buts, George; out with it, and mind you tell me the truth, for I know more about this matter than you do," said Mr. Morton rather severely.

"I cannot, sir—indeed, I cannot."

"Do not tell me that; I must, and will know what you know about the matter," cried Mr. Morton sternly.

"I cannot tell," replied the man sullenly.

"Remember, my lad, that one word from my lips would consign you to a prison, and then refuse at your peril."

The man shuddered at this speech, for he had had a dark past, upon which he did not wish to look back, since it was always pregnant of punishment for him. Without entering into details of what George Grey had done in his youth, thus to cause him to tremble before a fellow-being, and fear to be denounced to justice, suffice it to say, that there was a dark spot on his reputation, the conse-

quences of which he had escaped from by the kindness and pity of Mr. Morton, and that he was thus doubly bound to the latter.

George paused some minutes, looked at the ground, and then raised his eyes to those of his companion, saying at the same time :

“It must be as you choose, sir ; but I know I am doing wrong, and will suffer by it, if Mr. Strong ever learns that I have told you what I know of the affair.”

“Never mind that, but tell me the truth, and you shall be the gainer for it,” said Mr. Morton.

“You were always kind to me, so I will tell you all.”

George Grey related to his eager listener all he himself knew of the matter ; he also stated what he had seen in Portman Square, and that he was hastening to give the information to his master. When George had finished, our friend said :

“Are you not aware that the occupant of that house is Sir Harold’s son ?”

"No, I never knew; how should I know anything about people who are far above me, and who look down upon me, as if I was the dirt beneath their feet," exclaimed George, sullenly.

"There you are mistaken! If you were willing to occupy the position which Nature intended you should, you would not feel the rebuffs you must naturally expect to receive when stepping out of your proper place," replied Mr. Morton.

As this remark was somewhat beyond George's comprehension, he replied:

"I must not wait any longer, or Mr. Strong will suspect that something is in the wind."

"You may go now; but mind that you do not mention having seen the gentleman at the window—if you do, I shall not forget it," cried Mr. Morton, in a significant manner.

"I will do as you bid."

With this they parted; and our friend proceeded to write the note of warning which we have seen the Earl receive;

whilst the young man, after separating from his old acquaintance, wended his way quickly along the street in the direction of the place where he was to meet his master; at the same time cursing his unlucky stars that he had met with this unpleasant friend, to whom he owed a deep debt of gratitude, which he did not wish to pay off at the expense of his new profession. He was not forgetful of the services he had received from the man he had just parted with; but, as is the case with most men, he would have liked to have repaid them in some manner which would not have inconvenienced himself in the least.

Before meeting with Mr. Morton, George Grey had felt extremely proud of his prowess in having discovered the residence of the man bearing a close resemblance to the one whom his master was in search of. But now all this knowledge was as nothing, being rendered useless to him by the power held over him by another. With these thoughts passing rapidly.

through his mind, he did not hear the footsteps behind him, and was only aroused from his reverie by a hand being placed upon his shoulder; and then, turning round with a nervous start, he stood face to face with Mr. Strong. The thought that he had been watched flashed through the brain of George in an instant, and he resolved to be on his guard.

"Who was that gentleman you were talking with, some few minutes ago?" asked Strong.

"An old friend of mine, who saved my life in Australia. This is the first time I have seen him, in three years or more," was the reply.

"The one you have sometimes spoken to me about?"

"The same."

"What did you see in that house in Portman Square to interest you so much that you stood there for ten minutes at least?" exclaimed the detective.

George here saw that it would be worse

than useless to attempt to prevaricate in the matter, and concluded that the only safe way was to make a clear statement of the whole subject, and then to trust to Mr. Morton's not being offended at what it was impossible to escape from doing.

"I was looking at a man who very much resembled the one we are in search of," answered the young man.

"So I thought, my lad," answered the detective. "I have had my eyes on the same man. The house must be watched."

"Must I go back now?" asked George.

"Oh! no, to-morrow will be time enough; you may be certain that he will not leave the house before then." Here the detective stopped for a moment to consider, and then said, "But on second thoughts, I think you had better return, and remain there until I come. The best way will be for you to have some supper, and then return."

In just an hour's time from that, accordingly, George was again on watch before the mansion in Portman Square, and at

eleven o'clock was met there by Mr. Morton, who demanded of the youthful detective if he had seen his master, and what had occurred in his absence. The young man, who was quite bewildered between his two masters, told him all, and our friend was much disappointed and annoyed by the circumstance, but refrained from blaming the blundering embryo detective.

During the conversation the door of the suspected house opened, and the Earl of Merwyn came forth, gazed around to see if there was anyone near, but failed to see the two men, who were standing in the shadow of the wall; and, fancying all secure, entered the street, and walked hastily away, upon which George would have followed him, but Mr. Morton prevented his doing so, much to the horror of the young man, who felt certain that his employer would discover his dereliction from duty.

"What shall I say to Mr. Strong?" asked George.

"Tell him, when you return, that as yet the person has not left the house, and advise

him to put off inquiring as long as possible—do you understand?”

“I do, sir.”

“Here is something for your pains,” said Mr. Morton, putting some money in the willing hand as he turned to depart; “and if you serve me well, you shall have as much more,” he continued, and then disappeared.

Grey examined the money, and found ten notes of five pounds each, whereupon he became extremely delighted, and resolved to be faithful to his new master. When Strong came the next morning, George told him what he had been directed to do, and succeeded in inducing the detective to wait until the evening, so as not to spoil the plan by too much precipitation.

On the morning of the 5th of July, there might have been seen a man, at the hour of six, wending his way in the direction of ——. In about ten minutes he reached a house, before which he stopped, and narrowly scrutinised its outward appearance. At length, having satisfied himself that he was at his destination, he rang

vigorously at the bell, and knocked loudly. In a short time the door was opened by a man partly dressed, who inquired what the person wanted at such an early hour.

"I must speak with the Earl of Merwyn."

"He is not here, sir," answered the man.

"Come, come, you need not tell me any lies, but take this card, and see if any one will see me!" cried the stranger, thrusting a card, with some lines in pencil on it, into the man's hand.

The door was closed, but in a few moments it was again opened, and the stranger was shown into a room, where he saw the Earl in his dressing-gown, pacing the floor in the most intense excitement.

"I did not expect to see you, Mr. Morton. What is there that you wish to speak to me about which involves life or death?" cried the Earl.

"There is no need of beating about the bush; the sooner we come to the point the better. Your lordship will be arrested for

murder before twelve o'clock to-night, unless you leave the country," said Mr. Morton.

The Earl saw at a glance that all was known.

"On leaving your house last night," continued Mr. Morton, "you would have been tracked here, if I had not interfered to prevent it."

"How can I escape?" cried Lord Merwyn.

"Waste no words; but prepare at once to leave by the morning mail for the Continent. I promise to keep all quiet until you are in safety, and if you require money, my purse is at your service."

"Why you should wish for my safety I cannot imagine; you have no reason to love me!" exclaimed the Earl.

"Say no more about that; but get ready, every moment is precious."

In an hour all was arranged, and the Earl and Mr. Morton, having left the house, and wended their way toward the nearest cab-stand, were soon driving to

the London Bridge station. And we may here mention, that no ordinary acquaintance would have known the Earl, so changed had he become, by simply shaving off his moustache and whiskers. When the Earl was seated in the train, he asked Mr. Morton why he had done this invaluable kindness for him; and Mr. Morton, bending forward, whispered a word in his ear. Just then the bell rung, and the train moved away, without allowing us to notice the effect of our friend's words.

CHAPTER XIX.

LADY HARRIET HARGREAVE.

LATE that night Mr. Strong, with two policemen, rang the bell of Merwyn House in Portman Square; and upon the door being opened, the former demanded of the servant if his master were in. The footman replied that his lordship had left home the night before, and had not yet returned; but this did not satisfy Strong, who insisted on entering the house in search of the Earl, notwithstanding the objections made by the porter and footmen, nor did they give way until the detective made known his official position, and the purpose of his visit, upon which the horrified and astonished men stood rooted to the spot, and made no more resistance.

As the detective and his followers were ascending the stairs to make the search, they met Lady Harriet Hargreave, who had heard the noise in the hall, and come from the drawing-room to ascertain what was the cause of it; and who, on seeing three men, demanded who they were, and why they were there.

"To arrest the Earl of Merwyn for murder!" exclaimed Mr. Strong.

Lady Harriet was transfixed to the spot.

"Murder! My son accused of murder! Oh, God! Is this the punishment I am to receive? It is more than I can bear up against. For murder! Who do you dare to say my son has murdered?" she wildly cried.

"His wife, we have every reason to suppose," replied the man.

"It is false! he never had a wife. It is not true. He cannot be guilty!" exclaimed the mother.

"I am sorry to say that we must examine the house, to see if his lordship is not concealed anywhere in it," said

Mr. Strong, as he was about to pass on.

"That I shall not allow, you have no right to do so," rejoined Lady Harriet, haughtily. "John, show these men the door," she continued.

"Here is the warrant for making the necessary search," replied Mr. Strong, producing a paper.

The sight of that fearful document was too much for the already overstrung nerves of Lady Harriet; the hall seemed to fade away before her into space, everything grew dark to her eyes, and with a moan she fell heavily to the floor. The servants carried the fainting form of their mistress to her own room, and then the house was examined high and low, without the least success attending the investigation. When Mr. Strong had reluctantly become convinced that the Earl was away, he left one man to keep watch for the coming back of the Earl, if he should return, and then went in search of him elsewhere; and it was not until the next morning that he discovered that the bird had flown across

the channel, and was now in safety, secure from all pursuit. The news of this strange affair was not long in spreading through the length and breadth of London, and in due course of time it reached the ears of the Courtlands, who were horror-stricken by the announcement.

Mr. Wendell was filled with dismay at the intelligence, and Margaret could scarcely believe the evidence of her own ears, so terrible did the crime of the Earl seem. She murmured thanks to the Almighty, that He had, in the fulness of His mercy, permitted her to escape from becoming the wife of such a man, and shuddered when she thought that all this might have been done for her, and that she might have been the innocent cause of this awful deed !

The discovery and flight of the murderer was the theme in every drawing-room, every club, and, in fact, wherever persons met together. People would even gather in small knots in the streets, to discuss the all-absorbing topic of the day.

Society was thrown into a panic by the

crime of one of its noblest members. The Court itself was scandalized by one of its body being guilty of such an outrage against the laws of the land.

The most miserable being in all London, during these and many other similar conversations, which occurred on the day after the flight of the culprit, was Lady Harriet Hargreave, who had been carried to her room in a faint, from which she was only recovered by the greatest exertions; nor was she able to leave her bed when she came to herself. The family doctor was sent for, and did not leave her until towards morning, at which time her ladyship became quiet, and fell into a troubled sleep. When she awoke the next day, she found that Margaret had been to inquire after her health, and would come again during the afternoon. Lady Harriet was broken-hearted, her cup of misery was running over; the greatest blow possible had been aimed at her, and destroyed the fabric of her fond and worshipped pride? Her son, her hope, her joy, the one she lived for, was a wanderer. These thoughts filled

her mind, and almost drove her wild.

When Margaret returned to Merwyn House, she was unutterably sad; for her spirits were easily depressed by the sorrows of others, and the grief of one who was to have been her mother-in-law had drawn her soul into a depth of shadow, from which she could not escape. Miss Wendell had come on a mournful errand, had come to sorrow and sympathise with the afflicted, the heavy of heart and weary of spirit, and she trembled as she paused on the threshold of the chamber of sadness, for how could she frame words suitable for an occasion like this? How could she find expressions deeply enough tinged with sympathy to soothe the wounded heart? What would not Margaret Wendell have given, as she stood on the portals of that chamber of dead hope and blighted life, for words efficacious enough to bind up the broken heart and bid it live! But, alas! she knew that she had none, and could only resolve to do her best, and hope for happy results.

"Margaret, dear, is that you?" said Lady Harriet, as the visitor bent over the bedside, and pressed the fevered lips of the sufferer.

"I hope that you feel better, dearest Lady Harriet," replied Margaret, softly.

"I am better than I was; but it is not the body—the heart is sick, and oh! so sick, Margaret, that it must die!" cried Lady Harriet.

"Oh! do not say that; you must not give way to such feelings—your strength will yield unless you try to get well."

"Get well! why should I try to get well? What is life to me, when the sun will never again rise on my hopes! No, no, Margaret, I have no wish to survive this; my whole being was centred in Henry, and as he is now dead to the world, so is the world dead to me. All the bright dreams of other days have faded away; the rude wind of adversity has blasted all my joys."

Here Lady Harriet burst into fresh paroxysms of grief, from which it was long before Margaret's tender assiduity and skill could bring her into a state of comparative calm.

CHAPTER XX.

AUSTRALIA.

ONE morning, in the month of May, 18—, there might have been seen, hastily walking through one of the streets of Liverpool which led to the quays, a boy of fourteen years of age, dressed in the apparel worn by the sons of people of wealth and station. As the youth wended his way quickly along the narrow and crowded street, he was often jostled by some sailor or ragged boy as they pushed on, careless of ceremony; and, indeed, any excess of politeness would have been somewhat out of place in this portion of the great and thriving city of Liverpool; for the houses which lined the narrow way were low and gloomy, and bore the unmistakable evidences of poverty, in habitual companionship with vice. This was,

in fact, the sailor's quarter, or the trap, in which these reckless but generous fellows were cheated in every possible manner, never leaving it with any money.

As the youth, whom we will call James Warren, was from time to time jostled unceremoniously by the passers-by, the blood might have been seen to come into his cheek, and the fire to play in his eye; and as it may be as well before going further to give our readers some description of this boy, who seemed so much out of place in this region of poverty, we may, in the first place, state that he was above the height of most boys of his age, and had a frame which promised in time to become one of great strength. His hair was brown, his eyes blue, bright, full of depth and expression, and the other features were regular and handsome. His whole appearance, in fact, would have been eminently pleasing, had it not borne evidences of suffering, and had not his mouth been compressed in a manner which gave a stern look to his countenance.

"I say, Mr. Warren, we had better be

in a hurry, or else the ship will leave us behind," said a short man, who came up behind.

The boy turned round suddenly, but, on seeing the man, smiled, and nodded, and the two then walked quickly in the direction of the shipping, and in less than ten minutes they were alongside a splendid clipper-rigged ship bound for Australia, the name of which was the "Bird of Passage," a very appropriate one for a ship sailing from an English port to the colony of Australia.

When James had reached the deck, he at once left his companion, and walked to the after-part; and whilst he was gazing over the side of the vessel, it would have been more than ever evident to an observer that his manly heart was combating with vigour against some sorrow, although sometimes a bright tear would steal into his eye, and stand glistening on the lash.

Now all is stir and bustle on the noble ship, and the hardy crew, pulling in the giant ropes, which have for so many days

held them to their native land, sing merrily over their work, at which they go with a will. The steam-tug is ahead of them, puffing, blowing, and straining to draw the great ship through the waters, until it has crossed the bar, when the little steam-tug takes a long farewell. The wind is fresh, blowing over the quarter, and the sails are set with many songs, as the ponderous sheets of white slowly ascend the tall masts. The rattling of the cordage, the noise of the tramp of many feet, the creaking sails as they fill with wind, all these sounds fall upon the ear of James Warren as so many signals of expatriation. But why should he care, since home had been to him an earthly hell, the fire of which he could no longer stand, since he was flying from the oppression of a step-mother, who forgot all the love she should have borne towards him, in the wrath she felt that he should deprive her own dearly-loved son of inheriting the family property. The young life of this youth had indeed been rendered one of misery by the unkindness and oppression

of a fiend, who called herself a woman and a Christian.

Driven to despair by the constant and increasing acts of unkindness, which were feebly remonstrated against by a weak, vacillating old man, who worshipped the ground trodden by his wife, the youth at length rebelled; and when the old man died, leaving his wife sole guardian to his two children, this last act of injustice was the last hair that broke the camel's back of patience. High-minded, noble of impulse, and generous of disposition, the boy saw in the future, years of oppression, wrong and injury, from which he could not escape, unless he fled from family, friends, and country; and at length, at the suggestion, and by the aid of one who seemed to be his friend, he resolved to throw in his lot amongst the sons of adventure, and to emigrate to Australia.

The reader will no doubt have seen long ere this that James Warren and Sir Robert Hargreave are one and the same person; and the immediate causes which led to his taking

the rash step above described, was as follows.

On his ancestral estate was a man named John Burton, holding the office of under-gamekeeper, who was a ruffian, feared and detested by all who knew him, and whose reputation had suffered very much at the hands of Madam Rumour, who, truly or ill-naturedly, said that John Burton had been guilty of some dark crime in his younger days, of which, through some technicality only, the law had never been able to take cognisance. Now to this man Lady Harriet had communicated a wish; which he was only too glad to be instrumental in carrying out, as he saw that it would be money in his pocket; and his path was made easier by the fact that this man was a favourite, strange as it may seem, with the young Sir Robert, who delighted in listening to his stories of other lands, especially of Australia, in which country he had passed several years, and undergone almost all the adventures which could possibly be met with in that wild and thinly inhabited region.

The task which Lady Harriet induced this man to undertake, was to instil into the baronet's mind a desire to emigrate; and as John Burton was just the sort of man to carry out the wishes of his mistress, he soon succeeded in filling the young boy's mind with an intense desire to flee from his house. Having first led Robert to confide to him the wrongs and injustice he had received from his mother, Burton took his young master's side with great warmth, advised him to resist, and at length urged him to run away from such thralldom, adding that he was himself going very soon to return to Australia, and would bear him company if he had the nerve to leave home. At the same time, the wily Burton cautioned his master not to say or do anything by which Lady Harriet or any other person could hear of the intended plan, so as to be able to frustrate it; and to this suggestion, Robert, of course, yielded a ready assent. The next thing, and the one of the greatest importance, was how to ob-

tain sufficient money to pay the passage out; and when Burton had sufficiently impressed upon his master the difficulty of achieving this, he said that he had some money which he had saved, and that it was at the service of Sir Robert. The boy at first refused to touch a penny of the money; but on Burton's saying that it could be repaid when Sir Robert came of age, the young Baronet was satisfied, and consented to share it with the gamekeeper.

The money which Burton intended to use for paying his own and his master's expenses of the journey, came, it need scarcely be said, from Lady Harriet, who was only too glad to send the heir out of the way, so that he might by some means fail to return.

More fully to explain the motives of her ladyship, it will be necessary to give a portion of a conversation which took place between her and the gamekeeper.

One morning Lady Harriet had gone into the Park for a walk by herself, and

having been joined by John Burton, the pair turned into one of the by-paths, where no one would be likely to see them; and then Lady Harriet said, as they stopped,

"So Sir Robert is bent upon going to Australia?"

"He is, your ladyship," answered Burton.

"How soon does he intend going?" she asked.

"As soon as I am ready," replied the man.

"When will that be?"

"As soon as your ladyship has no commands for me here," he said.

"Very good; you need not wait any longer, your wages are ready for you whenever you wish for them; and here are ten pounds to provide yourself with what trifles you may want," she exclaimed.

"Thanks, my lady, for your kindness."

"You will be well paid for all your trouble. Two hundred pounds will be given to you, besides the money for the passages

when you start; and on your return you will receive one hundred more for your attention to my son; but if circumstances should occur which would render him incapable of returning, or if"—here she paused—"if he should die, you will receive eight hundred pounds. Do you understand?" she continued, looking at the man with a meaning glance.

"Perfectly, my lady, you need not fear my making a mistake, when there is money in the question. All your wishes shall be executed to the letter. When I return from Australia your ladyship will have no cause to complain of my not being a faithful and devoted servant," said the man, with a death's-head grin.

When everything had been prepared, the passages in the "Bird of Passage" paid for, and what necessary things Sir Robert needed obtained by stealth from the house, and packed in a box belonging ostensibly to Burton, but in reality the property of Lady Harriet—when all this had been done, Burton and Sir Robert set out for Liverpool the night

before the ship left, so as, said Burton, to give no time for any one to stay his flight.

But here let us mention, that at that supreme moment when Robert was about to leave his home, as he thought for ever, and a crowd of contending emotions filled his breast, his one predominant idea was that he could not leave without once more seeing his half-brother ; and as he stole into his room, and lightly kissed the sleeping lad's forehead, he breathed a prayer that Henry might enjoy the possessions which to himself had been only a constant source of misery.

The next morning, of course, Sir Robert did not appear at breakfast ; and when he was searched for, his room was found empty, although the bed had been tumbled as if it had been occupied during the night. But when Lady Harriet was apprised of this circumstance, she said that the boy had no doubt gone into the park for a stroll, and taken breakfast at some of the lodges, as he sometimes did ; and it was not until the day passed on without the youth making his appearance, that Lady Harriet, knowing that

by that time he must be safe at sea, thought it consistent with her position as his guardian to make a great outcry, and have him searched for everywhere. For a long time the search was unsuccessful ; but at length, after much trouble, it was discovered that the boy had gone to Australia. And then Lady Harriet made a great show of sending out a special agent to seek for him ; but somehow the agent not only failed to transmit any information, but was himself never heard of any more. •

We will now return to the ship, which was just getting under sail when we left it ; and refraining from entering into details of the events which occurred during the passage, as they have no bearing on our story, will content ourselves by saying that the good ship had a splendid run, and landed her passengers at Melbourne, where our story for awhile must linger.

We will not attempt to describe the town of Melbourne, as all our readers must have seen many better descriptions of it than we could give them, and therefore suffice it to say

that Sir Robert Hargreave and James Burton made a small tavern in that city, bearing the name of the "Black Eagle," their temporary abode. The reasons for this selection being, in the first place, because it was cheap; and secondly, because it was frequented by the kind of persons that Burton most liked to associate with. He knew many of the wretches who infested the town, and was acquainted with the country for miles round; in fact, he was almost a native of the place, where he had spent many years.

This man had completely understood the wishes of his mistress, when she informed him that if circumstances should occur to render it impossible for Sir Robert to return to England, he would receive eight hundred pounds; and he resolved to satisfy them, if possible, by implicating his companion in some infamous crime, which would be the means of incarcerating him for a very, very long time in an Australian gaol. If this plan should fail—well, there was an ultimate resource.

After remaining for two weeks in Melbourne, Burton proposed that they should go

further into the country, as they were running short of money, and must find some work to replenish their purses. To this proposition Sir Robert yielded a willing consent, as he was heartily sick of the company he met at the tavern. Acting upon this new-formed resolution, they left the town, and made their way in the direction of some small settlements about one hundred and fifty miles distant. This journey was accomplished on foot; no adventures worth mentioning occurred to them during their travel. Twice had Burton determined to earn his reward, but circumstances arose which made it impossible, so he relinquished his intention until a more favourable opportunity should present itself; which was not the case during the journey. The time taken to do this little walking was nine days, during which they carried their own provisions with them, having sent their luggage on in advance. On arriving at this place (which was called the Black Settlement, from the circumstance that the first inhabitant was a negro), they procured lodgings in a small cabin, which they eventually had to

themselves, as the man who shared it with them died of a fever. Thus left alone, Burton took the first opportunity which offered itself for earning the promised reward, according to the ultimate plan he had proposed to himself, the first, after many attempts, having proved a decided failure.

One day Sir Robert and Burton left the settlement for the purpose of fishing at a lake some thirty miles distant, having arranged to be gone a week, and provided themselves suitably for the occasion. One night, during their stay in a romantic but secluded spot, both of them seemed asleep, when Burton arose cautiously, and advanced towards the young Baronet, knife in hand. The moon was brightly shining, the blade flashed as it was raised on high, before descending into the heart of the young victim, and in another moment Lady Harriet's wishes would have been fulfilled, when the assassin paused, seized with the sensation of the presence of some third person, and it cost him the chance he had so longed for ; for a similar sensation aroused Sir Robert, and as he had for some time

past been rather suspicious of his companion, he understood in an instant the imminence of his danger, and levelling a revolver, with which he had secretly provided himself in Melbourne, at the head of the would-be assassin, demanded sternly, "What is the meaning of this?"

The man hung his head, but said nothing.

"Tell me at once why you have attempted to take my life. It cannot be for money, as I have none. Who, then, has employed you, villain, to assassinate me?"

Here a dark suspicion flashed across his brain, and he murmured half-audibly to himself,

"Surely Lady Harriet cannot have employed this villain to murder her husband's son!"

"No, no, it was not she!" cried the man confusedly.

"No lies to me! Unless you confess at once, your life will not be worth ten minutes purchase. Come, now, confess, or die!" exclaimed Sir Robert, as he brought the pistol to bear on the heart of the would-be assassin.

There was such a dangerous wild light in the lad's eyes that the ruffian, startled, exclaimed—

“It was your mother who induced me to attempt your life. I should never have thought of it, if it had not been for that,” said Burton.

“That will do. Now throw your knife down.”

The man did as he was bid.

“What were you to receive for this deed of blood?” asked the Baronet.

Burton here related all that occurred between Lady Harriet and himself, with regard to the reward he was to receive for the death of her eldest son.

Sir Robert slept no more that night, but sat musing over the strange events which had occurred, and the awful secret he had learned from the lips of the villain who now lay calmly sleeping some few yards from him, as if he had done nothing to disturb his slumbers.

The next morning Sir Robert promised not to give the man up to the authorities, if

he would for the future keep away from him. This the ruffian willingly acceded to, and they set out to return to the settlement. During the few days of their absence from the little town a fever which was prevalent there had become worse; and numbers of people were leaving the place, including even those who had been touched with the epidemic. Among the latter was a young boy about the same age and size as Sir Robert Hargreave, and having such a general resemblance to him that people who had only casually seen the two might readily confound one with the other. This lad, whose name is unknown to us, having left the settlement by himself, had died on the road, and his body had been lying unburied for about twenty-four hours when our party discovered it.

The Baronet was at once struck with the resemblance to himself; and the idea then flashed through his mind that this body might be passed off as his own, without the cheat being discovered.

Acting on this idea, he communicated his

wishes to his companion, who at first did not comprehend him, and was opposed to the scheme ; but on being informed by his young friend that, if he complied with it, he, Burton, could claim from Lady Harriet the price offered for his death, and that he, the Baronet, would not interfere, as he should not make known the false statement for some years to come, at least, until he should be able to return and resist his mother's oppression, the scheme was at once adopted by the villain, who saw the chance of gaining the coveted prize without incurring the slight inconveniences which sometimes attend the committal of a murder.

When all had been arranged, Sir Robert demanded how much money he had left, and the man replied that he only had a few pounds.

"There is no use in lying to me!" cried the young Baronet sternly ; "give me at once one hundred pounds of the two hundred you received from my mother, or else I will make short work of you. Do you hear? I am not to be trifled with!"

Burton saw that there was no use in refusing, so he yielded up the money with the best grace he could. They then placed the body where it would not be seen, and set out again for the settlement. When they approached it, Burton, according to arrangement, went in by himself, and brought out the articles which Sir Robert wanted; he also brought a pony which they had purchased some time before. When all these arrived, Sir Robert bade adieu to his companion, and set out upon his journey.

Burton then returned again to the town, and told the police (for there was a small body stationed there) the story about his young master. The policemen at once had the body brought into the town; and several people who had seen the young Baronet testified to this being his body; and the officials, on their part, proud of being concerned in a romantic affair relating to a member of the English aristocracy, took upon themselves, after a brief examination of James Burton, to attest by a formal document that Sir Robert Hargreave, Bart., of Brompton Court,

England, had died of malignant fever on the high road between Melbourne and Black Station. This was sent to England, and its principal effects were, that a monument was erected in the family chapel; that Burton received his eight hundred pounds; and that Henry became the Baronet, and master of the fine Hargreave estate.

It now rests with us to give a short and succinct account of the adventures, fortunes, and wanderings of our young friend, who had thus abandoned home, friends, and fortune to seek that happiness among strangers in a foreign land which was denied him in his own home.

After taking leave of Burton, he struck off in the direction of Melbourne, hoping to find there some occupation. But although he was now just past the age of fifteen, he had the appearance of being older from his height and strength. In spite of this, however, he remained some months at Melbourne without finding any employment; and then, as his money was gradually decreasing, he resolved to set out for the country, and see if he could

find there some means of support. Acting upon this determination, he once more turned his back on "the golden city," and struck into the country. When he had gone some thirty miles on his way, he made an application at a sheep-farmer's for work, but was refused. This occurred a number of times, until at last Sir Robert came to a farmhouse, which looked so cheerful and inviting, that he could not resist the impulse he felt to again ask from its owner the employment which had been so often refused to him by others.

Before the house was a small garden and green lawn, through which the Baronet walked to the door, at which he gave a knock, which was speedily answered by a rough, kind-hearted looking man.

"What is it you want, my lad?" he said.

"I have been looking for some work, but have been refused by all whom I have asked," replied Sir Robert.

"People do not like to take those they do not know something of. Probably they thought you were an escaped convict, al-

though you seem too young for transportation; but there are many younger than you in this country who are serving their time."

"I am no convict; and as you do not want me, I will leave," cried Sir Robert, rather angrily, as he turned to go.

"Stay a bit, my lad, do not run away. I did not say you were a convict, Lord bless me! but that some, as young as you, are so, unfortunately. Come in and rest yourself, my boy."

Sir Robert accepted the invitation, and the two were soon seated over a mug of beer and some bread and cheese, which they discussed; whilst the man, whose name was Ralph Morton, plied the youth with many questions, all of which the latter readily answered, concealing only his real name and rank.

Mr. Morton was very much pleased with the frank, honest nature of the boy, and offered to give him a place on his farm. When Sir Robert had been there about three months, he told his employer that he had sixty pounds in money, which he did not

know what to do with, and wished him to take care of it for him. Now, Mr. Morton, who was a man possessed of a very large fortune, made from sheep-farming and speculation in land, was desirous of doing something for this young man, for whom he had taken the greatest fancy ; and, accordingly, he offered to give him such a number of acres of land as could be stocked with the sum in question, and to allow him to have all the profits for himself. At the same time, he allowed to his young *protégé* the full use of his own time ; and thus was our hero placed at once in a pleasant and comparatively independent position.

Time rolled on, and some five years had passed without making any change in the everyday routine of the life at Harley Farm, which was the name of the enormous estate owned by Mr. Morton, when the latter died ; and on his will being examined, it was found to give all he possessed to his adopted son, Robert Warren (the name assumed by the young baronet in Australia), who was to take the name of Robert Morton.

Mr. Morton was now a man of enormous wealth, and could have at once returned to his native land and claimed his birthright. He remained, however, two or three years longer, to settle his affairs, and to obtain certain information from England; and it was not until he had attained his twenty-fourth year, that, at length, he revisited England; and then, having invested his money in land and mortgages, he proceeded to spend two years in travelling, in company with an eminent private tutor, with whom he studied diligently; whilst at the same time frequenting the best foreign society.

On his twenty-sixth birthday, he once more returned to his native land, a stranger to all, and believed to be dead by all who had ever known him, whilst another was revelling in his wealth, and bearing the title which was his birthright. But his great wealth, distinguished appearance, eminent abilities, varied experience, and amiability of character, soon procured for him hosts of friends, and an introduction to the best society, which was perfectly satisfied with the vague rumour

that Mr. Morton was the younger son of an old county family, who, after having wandered about the world recklessly for some years, had been suddenly recalled home to take possession of the ancestral estates, which had suddenly and unexpectedly become his by the accidental death of an uncle and two cousins. Having thus brought Mr. Morton to the position in which we first found him, it is time that we should give some explanation of his subsequent conduct.

CHAPTER XXI.

AN EXPLANATORY CHAPTER.

IT was rather wounded pride than harshness which drove Robert from his home. When Lady Harriet found that the frequent blow, the constant taunt, and the unceasing humiliation, were borne by her stepson with Spartan equanimity, she began to attack the memory of his mother. Beginning with dark inuendo she went on to direct accusation, and at length declared to the indignant, bewildered, helpless lad, that she who had given him birth had lived with his father as his mistress long before she had become his wife. Distracted with passion, the unhappy boy gave his tormentor the lie; and then with quiet, malignant coolness, she laid before him the certificate of his father's marriage with his mother, and the certificate of his own birth,

and pointed out that they were dated within a few days of each other.

“You are the child of sin and shame,” shouted the termagant to the pale, heart-stricken lad, “and it was only because the doctors assured him that neither she nor her brat could live, that the weak old man consented, at the last moment, to go through the form of marriage with the hussy who was the bane of his manhood, and whose child is now the disgrace of his ancestral name. You are a living liar, and a robber of the heritage which was never intended for you !”

These words, which would merely have extorted an amused smile from the lips of a man of the world, sank deep into the heart of the inexperienced lad of fourteen, and exercised an exaggerated influence over his imagination. He pictured himself through life pointed at with the finger of scorn ; he heard in every future day of his life his own and his mother's name coupled with ugly epithets ; and after a few days of despair, such as only the young and innocent, or the old and wicked can know, he resolved to discard the hateful title, which

.

would remind every one that he had been conceived in sin, and to abandon estates every acre of which, as it seemed to his excited fancy, would, if he possessed them, be fruitful with the memory of his mother's shame.

* * * * *

Amongst the many forms of nightmare, there are few more distressing than that which leads the dreamer up long winding staircases, or through weary lengths of corridor, to leave him suddenly, at length, on the edge of some awful ghlf. Then, generally, with an awful crash, the victim falls, and all for a moment is as naught. But sometimes, also, a creaking balustrade, or quivering beam, offers a momentary clutch, and slowly, hoping against hope, with stillness at his heart, the dreamer passes back to peaceful slumber, or more pleasant visions. Now, on the dreary night when Robert was preparing to leave his home, as he thought for ever, it seemed to him as though all that might be pleasant and good in life, were lost to him, and that nothing but a weary gulf or chill existence lay between him and death; but as he stooped to kiss the

forehead of his sleeping brother, just before he departed, an idea irradiated his brain, a generous resolve warmed his heart. Yes, he *would* have something still to live for ! His life should be devoted to securing the welfare of his brother Henry !

“ For him,” said Robert to himself, “ be the broad acres, and the stately mansion ; for him the ancient title, and the hoarded gold ! And for me unswerving energy, and laborious days, to procure the means of assisting him, if he should ever need help ! ”

And this resolution did Robert religiously adhere to amidst all the vicious turmoil of the mushroom cities of New South Wales, amidst the busy commerce of Victoria, amidst the far-off, lonely, out-stations of Queensland. This resolution did he adhere to whilst engaged in dangerous moonlight raids amongst the half-wild cattle in the bush ; whilst hunting the subtle Wallaby in the scrub ; whilst manœuvring for his life amidst a group of threatening Aborigines, afar from all hope of succour.

Great was our hero's delight when he had become possessed of a fortune which would en-

able him to be of material assistance to his half-brother, should he be in need of it ; and one of his first actions after becoming possessed of it, was to send to England to ascertain that brother's position. He had little difficulty in discovering that Sir Henry had mortgaged the ancestral estates to almost their full extent ; and yet, although he was grieved at the recklessness which this fact implied, he was almost pleased at it when he considered that, as soon as he returned home, he would be able to set them free with a stroke of his pen.

But, alas ! when Morton had returned to England, and had begun to enter what is called " good society," such rumours reached him of Sir Henry's mode of life, as made him think it his duty to make further inquiries ; and although those were not the days in which every discharged policeman is in the habit of hiring some squalid room and advertising himself as a " private detective," Mr. Morton's vast resources, combined with his own natural ability, enabled him to trace the libertine's career through all its tortuous paths. A sad, lurid diorama that career was—of innocent

girls betrayed, ruined, and deserted; of brutal midnight orgies; of gambling transactions, always extravagant, and sometimes of fearfully doubtful character. But what attracted Mr. Morton's attention, and what at first grieved him most, was the secret Oxford marriage. When, however, after making strict inquiries, he found how good a daughter Florence had been, except in the one fact of eloping from her parents' home, and how tender and faithful a wife she had been to Sir Henry, he felt a deep sympathy with her, and resolved that, if money could make her an acceptable daughter-in-law to Lady Harriet, she should be a wealthy heiress.

Up to the time when the brothers first met in the grounds of Mr. Wendell's mansion, Mr. Morton's course appeared plain to him; for he would, he said to himself, relieve Sir Henry of all his pecuniary difficulties, bestow upon his wife such a dower as would induce Lady Harriet to receive her with, at least, civility, and then rest content, under his assumed name, with such a lot as might be in store for him.

But two circumstances combined to disturb this resolution; and the first of them was, Mr. Morton's discovery that Lady Harriet had grossly misrepresented the manner of his father's marriage with his mother, the facts of the case being simply as follows. Mr. Morton's mother was a young lady of ancient but poor family, with whom Sir Harold had been smitten at first sight, and to whom he had made open and honourable love; but when he asked his father's consent to his marriage with her, it was indignantly refused on account of her poverty, and the girl's family, as proud as they were poor, on their side forbade Sir Harold their house. The latter, however, was not to be so easily repulsed, and persuaded his sweetheart to elope with him to Scotland, where they were duly married, according to the law of that country. For some time the young lady's parents were inexorable, and refused to forgive her; but at length, when she appeared to be at death's door, they consented to do so in answer to her earnest entreaties, on condition that she should be remarried ac-

according to the rites of the Church of England; and she and Sir Harold were accordingly remarried by that special licence, of which Lady Harriet had made so cruel a use.

The second circumstance that shook Mr. Morton's determination as to the course he intended to pursue was his discovery that Sir Henry, already married to a loving and beautiful wife, was making fierce love to Miss Wendell. From this moment his long-cherished love for his half-brother changed, not to hate, but to bitter contempt, and he was half inclined with one fell grasp to strip him of his borrowed plumes. And why did he not do so?—because his conscience whispered to him, “Oh! Robert, Robert, you are yourself deeply, passionately in love with Miss Wendell, and you do not contest the prize fairly with Sir Henry, but will first degrade him, that you may gain an easy victory!” And then he replied to himself: “No; I will not do this thing. I, the obscure stranger, will sue for Margaret's love face to face with the wealthy Baronet, and will only use my power in case it should

be necessary to shield *her* from any harm ! ”

To this resolution, as we have seen, Mr. Morton steadfastly adhered, until, by means of the careful watch which he kept on all Sir Henry's movements, he learned, with horror and amazement, the designs of the latter against his wife. And why, it may be asked, did not our hero at once divulge his real position, and put an end to Sir Henry's wicked schemes by letting him know that they were discovered ? Because he knew that loving, trustful Florence would never believe any ill of her husband without the most convincing proofs ; and because he knew that his half-brother was so cruel and vindictive, that, when he found some of his villany laid bare, he would, if not checked, wreak his vengeance upon her head. So Mr. Morton allowed Henry to mature his diabolical plan, whilst he, on his side, made careful preparations to frustrate its fulfilment. Having entered into communication with Florence's family, and informed them of her position (we will not linger to describe the feelings excited amongst them by the recital), he proceeded,

with two of her brothers, to the lone house to which Florence was to be decoyed, and took up a position from which it would be easy to rush upon the would-be murderer.

When the hired assassin entered Florence's room, and retreated again, it occurred to Mr. Morton that he might have done so for the purpose of procuring a pistol with which to do the evil deed, and that in that case it might be difficult to frustrate the intended villany; he therefore agreed with her brothers at once to awake Florence, and to carry her off from the ill-omened dwelling through one of the windows, to which Mr. Morton had had some sloping boards secretly affixed. This plan was agreed upon, and it was the terrified cry raised by Florence, when she saw three men standing by her bedside, which convinced the hired ruffian and the wicked husband that the cruel business had been accomplished. Some hurried words quieted Florence's fears for the moment, and before she had time to think what it all might mean, she was on her way to a place of safety.

CHAPTER XXII.

RETRIBUTION.

BEFORE Robert, whom we shall henceforth call by his rightful title, the Earl of Merwyn, assumed his real position, he had a task to perform; and the task which Lord Merwyn had before him was likely to be attended by many an unpleasant feature, for it was an interview with the woman who had paid the assassin's knife to drink his heart's blood. How would she be able to see him?—how could she bear up against the double misfortune?—first, the crime and flight of her dearest son; secondly, the return to life of one whom she had believed and hoped was cold in the dreary tomb? Time had brought round in its course the period when she was to see all her proud fabric of worldly ambition crumble into dust before her affrighted

eyes, without possessing the least power to avert the ruin.

The third day after the discovery of the flight of the Honourable Henry Hargreave (for we must now divest him of the dignity and titles he wore during the voluntary exile of his elder brother) a gentleman ascended the steps of Merwyn House, rang the bell, and demanded of the footman to be shown directly into the presence of the Lady Harriet Hargreave.

"Her ladyship does not receive any visitors ; but her ladyship's mother, the dowager Lady Hargreave, is here, if she will do," said the porter respectfully.

"That will do ; shew me at once to her," exclaimed the gentleman.

He was then shown into the drawing-room, and in about ten minutes the door opened, and there entered the Dowager Lady Hargreave, who had come up from the country to be with her daughter-in-law, to console her in the midst of her sorrows. The old lady, as she walked into the room, looked ten years older than when we saw her last at Brompton

Court, and the traces of the added years were not those left by time, but by the mental sufferings of the last three days. Grief and shame had done their work, and had furrowed the brow with deeper lines of care than those graven by the "antique pen" of time.

This was the first time that old Lady Hargreave had ever seen Mr. Morton, and as her eyes caught sight of him she stopped and gazed with wonderment; nor did she move when he arose to receive her, but continued to stare and tremble with great emotion.

"Can it be possible, or am I labouring under some terrible dream? No, no, it cannot be my darling Robert; old eyes have lost their power—I must be mistaken. And yet he is so like, that as I look at him I can see my noble grandson, in all the pride of his boyhood, standing before me in man's estate. Had he lived, he would have been just like that. But, pardon me, sir," said the old lady recovering herself, "for staring at you in this rude manner. The fact is, that you are so like my poor dead grandson, that I believed that you were he at first; but, alas!

I shall never see his dear sweet face again in this world!" Here the old lady paused to wipe away a tear which dimmed her sight.

"You are not mistaken, my dear good grandmother. I am Robert, and have come back to see the dearest of beings, yourself!" cried the Earl of Merwyn.

"My God! can it be true?" exclaimed the old lady, as her grandson clasped her in his arms. "How delighted your poor mother will be!" she continued.

At this there came a dark shadow over the brow of the Earl.

"Have you not heard about poor Henry?" asked the grandmother.

"I know it all, and helped him to escape," answered the Earl.

"Tell me why you were so cruel as to run away from home and leave your old grandmother, who loved you so much?" said she, as the tears fell fast and thick down her cheeks.

"You well know, dearest grandmother, how I was treated at home, how all my feelings were outraged, and how all my poor

father's wishes were disregarded. All this drove me wild, and in a fit of desperation I left all, to seek happiness among strangers."

"I know too well all that occurred, and did my best to prevent it," she said.

"You did, grandmother; and if my mother had been like you, I should never have gone away," he cried.

"Did you find anyone who was kinder to you than I?" she exclaimed.

"Not one," he answered.

"You must tell me all that you have done since you left us; but another time will do, for now you had better come in to your mother, who, poor thing, will be so glad to see you."

"Stop a moment. The interview between Lady Harriet Hargreave and myself will not be very pleasant."

He then gave his grandmother a full account of his leaving home, the conduct of his mother in bribing Burton, the gamekeeper, to induce him to go to Australia; of Burton's attempt to assassinate him, and the confession

he forced from the villain. He also told her of their coming upon the body, which was passed off as his own, and, in fact, gave her a succinct account of all his doings since leaving home some twelve years before.

After Lord Merwyn had finished, his grandmother, who had been listening to the awful account of Lady Harriet's proceedings with the greatest intensity, raised her hands to heaven, and thanked God that he had brought her darling grandson back to her in safety. She was horrified at the unnatural designs of her daughter-in-law, and did not attempt to palliate her doings.

They now arose, and went to the chamber of Lady Harriet, who was sitting in an arm-chair reading some religious book. As the two entered she looked up, and saw with astonishment the gentleman with her mother-in-law.

"Why is this, that you bring Mr. Morton into my room without first asking my will?" cried Lady Harriet, rather sternly.

"I am no longer Mr. Morton, but Robert Hargreave, Earl of Merwyn, whom you drove

from his father's home by your cruelty!" cried the Earl.

"Away!—it is a lie!—you are not my stepson! Have you, Lady Hargreave, allowed yourself to be deceived by this shameless man? My son, sir, died some eleven years ago in Australia," exclaimed the invalid.

"No; he still lives, after escaping the knife of an assassin hired by his mother to spill his life's blood," replied the Earl.

"It is false! there never was a knife raised against his life," said Lady Harriet; "he died of the fever, and was buried eleven years ago."

"You were, then, deceived by the statements of that deeply-dyed villain, Burton? Were you foolish enough to give him the promised reward of eight hundred pounds if he returned to report my death?"

Whilst the Earl thus spoke, varying shades of terror and anguish swept over her ladyship's countenance, and at length she exclaimed,

"Stop! Oh! Robert, forgive me; do not

bring greater misery on a wretched woman than that she has already to bear! I have wronged you deeply, I confess, but do not make my punishment greater than I can endure. Listen to me; do not turn away, I beseech you. Oh! my God, forgive me! Henry, Henry, my poor boy, for whom I have done all, is gone! Forgive—forgive me!”

Suddenly her voice became weak, and and she fell to the floor with a heavy groan. Lord Merwyn and his grandmother rushed to her assistance, and summoning her attendants, endeavoured to restore her, but found every attempt was unsuccessful, until at last they were compelled, to their horror, to admit that she was dead. Yes, Lady Harriet had ruptured a blood-vessel in her excitement, and expired at the very moment when she had expressed a tardy repentance of her evil deeds.

The grandmother and grandson stood looking long and steadfastly upon the body of the woman who, five short minutes before, had appeared to have every chance of living to a

green old age ; and when at length they looked up, there was an appeal to the mercy of God in her behalf in the eyes of both.

“ Robert, let Death carry away all feelings of wrong and revenge ; your persecutor is now to be judged by her God, who will not swerve from justice, merciful and benign as He is. Let the past be forgotten, and remember that she was your father’s wife. Come, dear Robert, kiss the cold forehead, and forgive the dead for what she did when life was strong and passionate,” said the grandmother.

The Earl knelt down, and pressed his lips to the forehead of the inanimate form, and in his heart of hearts forgave her for all the sufferings he had endured ; and as he rose a tear was stealing down his cheek, in testimony that all was pardoned.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CONCLUSION.

THE extraordinary news of the return of Sir Robert Hargreave, Earl of Merwyn, created nearly as much excitement in the fashionable circles as the crime and disappearance of the Honourable Henry Hargreave, who had been for years considered the rightful heir; and the utmost eagerness was displayed to learn the particulars of the mystery, for nothing as yet had come to the public ear beyond the mere fact that the one who had been considered dead was now in England, alive. This news was also coupled with that of the death of Lady Harriet, and this event was universally attributed to the grief and prostration occasioned by the crime of her younger son, and the shock her nervous system must

have suffered at the sudden reappearance of one so long considered dead. Such was the idea that people formed of the cause of her death. How far it was true, the reader can best judge.

The Courtlands and Wendells, it need scarcely be said, were profoundly astonished and grieved at the death of one whom they had long known, and whose son they had already begun to regard as one of their own family.

It was now two days since Margaret had seen her lover, and she began to grow uneasy, and to fear that he would return no more.

Let us now introduce the reader to the drawing-room of Lord Courtland's house in Grosvenor Square, in which are seated the Countess, Margaret, Lady Frances, Lady Bertha, the Earl, and Mr. Wendell, who are all to return to the country in two days. The conversation between these personages has been on many different topics, and at length, as if by common accord, has turned upon the Hargreaves.

"I must confess," said Mr. Wendell, "that

I am very anxious to see Robert. I always liked him as a boy."

"Was he at all like Henry?" asked Margaret.

"Very unlike; two boys could not have been more so," replied her father.

"I feel very sorry for the old Lady Hargrave. So much misfortune to happen at the same time!" cried Lady Courtland.

"You forget that the return of Robert will go far to revive her. She was devoted to her absent grandson!" exclaimed Mr. Wendell.

"Poor Henry! what an awful thing to have happened! He will never be able to return to England, I suppose?" said the Countess, in the coolest manner possible.

"He will enjoy himself more on the Continent, under an assumed name, than he could do here, an outcast from society, even if he were pardoned," replied the Earl.

At that moment there was a ring at the front-door bell; in another instant the drawing-room door was thrown open, and a footman announced the Earl of Merwyn, who immediately entered the room.

"Mr. Morton!" cried the astonished and bewildered assembly in one voice. The ladies remained rooted to their seats in amazement; the gentlemen could not speak for wonder.

"I know, ladies, that you must be naturally surprised to see me when the servant announced the Earl of Merwyn; but strange as it may seem, I am Robert Hargreave Morton, Earl of Merwyn. The name of Morton was assumed, in consequence of my becoming the heir of a man of that name. I hope that the change will not make me less your friend;" so saying, the Earl advanced, and shook hands with the Countess and all the party.

"My dear Robert (I call you so as it is the only name by which I ever knew you), nothing can exceed the pleasure I feel in once more seeing the son of my dearest and best friend, Sir Harold!" exclaimed Mr. Wendell, as he shook the Earl's hand with the greatest fervour.

There was one in the room who had no power to speak, for emotions varied and strong had taken possession of her young

heart, and swayed it to and fro like a ship that is tossed on the surging billows. Her heart, indeed, was full to overflowing. But whilst, on the one hand, she now saw a chance of her young love being realized, she felt fearful, on the other, that the change of events might change the feelings of her lover. It was not long, however, before a glance from his eyes shot a thrill of hope and joy through her heart, making it beat with an indescribable pleasure, such as she had felt when the words of love fell for the first time from the lips of her lover.

Nearly an hour had been occupied by the Earl's explanation of the mystery attending him, when he arose to depart, and said,

"May I have a few words with you, Mr. Wendell?"

"Certainly," was the reply; and the two gentlemen went into the library.

When they had reached the room, the Earl said,

"I know, Mr. Wendell, that it may not be decorous just at present for me to speak of the subject which lies so near my heart; but

be that as it may, I cannot any longer refrain from speaking out. I love your daughter devotedly, and wish to make her my wife."

Lord Merwyn here paused for an answer.

"You take me by surprise. She was, as you have no doubt heard, engaged to your unfortunate brother; but, of course, all thought of marriage with him is at an end. I insisted on her accepting him, as I had promised your father that our families should be united in our children. Margaret, however, did not love Henry, as I now know; and from this fact I am determined not to let a promise made by me in other years destroy the happiness of my child; the dead would blame me for sacrificing her. My daughter is free to choose for herself. I will no longer endeavour to make her miserable. I should only be too glad if she would accept you. You, my dear Robert, have my consent to ask her hand."

"Thanks, many thanks!" cried the Earl. "Margaret," he continued, "loves me, and you need not fear that I shall fail to do all I can to make her happy."

The two gentlemen conversed for some time upon the occurrences of the past month, and also of the adventures of the Earl in Australia; and then Mr. Wendell, rising, said,

“Remain here. I know what will be pleasant to you.”

So saying, he left the Earl in the library.

In a few moments the door opened, and Margaret stood blushing and diffident upon the threshold. Lord Merwyn sprang to her side, took the willing hand, and threw one of his own round her waist; their lips met in the sweet pressure of love, their blood leaped through their veins with feverish force, and they felt their hearts mould themselves into one, in the ecstatic bliss of the first kiss of love.

“Margaret, dearest, your father has consented to my suit; he says that you are free to choose for yourself. May I hope that your choice will fall on me?” whispered Lord Merwyn. “Will you be my wife?” he continued, as he again pressed her lips.

“Yes,” murmured Margaret, as she hid her face on his shoulder.

* * * * *

Three months after the meeting of the Earl of Merwyn and Margaret their marriage was solemnised at the chapel in the park of Wendell Hall. Mr. Wendell gave away the bride, and looked perfectly contented, as his daughter was willingly carrying out his dearest wish—the promise to Sir Harold. For the sake of those curious in such matters we may add, that the wedding-party was only composed of the immediate relatives of the family, as Lord Merwyn wished the wedding to be as private as possible, on account of the late unpleasant occurrences.

Margaret had now not only regained the freshness and bloom of her youthful maidenhood, but was also beautiful with the growing loveliness of maturing womanhood. Her deep blue eyes were full of love and happiness; hope illuminated her features with its radiant glow.

The Earl of Merwyn was the picture of contentment and joy, for the crown of earthly happiness was soon to be his—soon, very soon—ah! in a few short minutes would the fair treasure be his wife; be united to him by

bonds which no man could put asunder. Happy—happy moment, when the deepest yearning of life is about to be gratified !

Lord Merwyn had been able to prove his identity with but little trouble. With the accumulations of the late Earl he had paid off the mortgage on his own estate; the money he had received with his wife served to disencumber Brompton Court; and he was now the richest nobleman in the three kingdoms, his rent-roll being estimated at three hundred thousand pounds per annum. The estate of Wendell Hall was settled upon the second son, if one there were. We will not give any description of the wedding, as it is an event which occurs every day, and must be familiar to all our readers—tears, smiles, champagne, white favours, sugar-coated cake, universal laudation by everyone of everyone.

Not long after the marriage of the Earl of Merwyn and Miss Wendell, there was another wedding. The principal characters of this fresh version of the greatest drama in life being Lord Rendford and Lady Frances

Atherley. The blushing bride was led to the altar by her father. The bridal pair started for Italy, where they met the Earl and Countess of Merwyn. They all remained for the winter in Rome, and returned to England in the spring.

In a little less than a year Lord Rendford and his wife were called upon to stand as godfather and godmother to a little girl, which had come upon this earth to cheer and gladden the already happy heart of Margaret, who thought that she had tasted of all that there was of joy upon this earth, until she pressed her child to her bosom; and then she learnt that there is a love even deeper and sweeter than that in which there must ever be some trace of earthly passion. The Earl was somewhat disappointed at its not being a boy, but no very long time elapsed before his hopes were again raised, and this time gratified by the birth of an heir, just fifteen months younger than the girl.

We will now give some account of the more recent proceedings of the Honourable Henry Hargreave.

After hearing the words whispered to him by his unknown brother, he fell back in astonishment and dismay, almost disbelieving his senses. Could it be possible, thought he to himself, that this strange man could be his dead brother returned to life? "There must be some mistake," he murmured to himself. "But if, indeed, this is true, I am then no longer the Earl of Merwyn, but only the Honourable Henry! And yet, after all, I might as well be the Honourable as the Earl, for neither title could shield me from danger and disgrace. It is just as well for the good of the family that there should be a head to it, who would not load it with infamy as I should. Although the man has crossed my path, still I have every reason to be grateful to him for rescuing me from the clutches of the infernal police. As for money, I have enough to answer my purposes." Such were the disjointed thoughts that jostled together in the Earl's half stupefied brain. But one idea reigned supreme, and that, expressed in words, was—"At any rate, if I can only get away, I shall have money enough to live on!"

Before quitting London, Mr. Hargreave, who then enjoyed the title of the Earl of Merwyn, had drawn from his bankers all the proceeds of his gains upon the turf, and the whole of the quarterly rent of his estates, which had just been paid in. The whole sum amounted to one hundred and sixty thousand pounds, and this sum, invested in certain foreign securities, would provide him with a very satisfactory income.

At every station where the train stopped, the fugitive drew back with apprehension, lest the head of an officer of justice should be thrust through the window; and often and bitterly did he curse the new invention of telegraphing, as otherwise he would have been secure from all danger. The nearer he came to the coast, the more nervous he became, until great drops of perspiration stood upon his forehead. At length the steamer was gained with a sigh of satisfaction, which was soon lost in fresh fears, as he gained the French coast, for he well knew that even there he could be seized; nor did he rest content until the Prussian boundary was reached.

Then, and then only, did he feel relieved from the sickening pressure which had almost crushed his heart.

He was now safe ; no officer of justice could lay his hand upon his shoulder, and lead him before a jury, that it might consign him to the tender mercies of the hangman ; and to the fugitive this reflection gave an exquisite sensation of pleasure ; but we must own that it is not a sensation which we should like to experience.

The principal occupation of Henry Hargreave for the rest of his days was frequenting Homburg, Wiesbaden, and Baden, under an assumed name, and playing constantly at the gambling-tables with varied success, sometimes winning and then losing. He never allowed himself, however, to lose more than his income would allow, and in that way prevented himself becoming a beggar, which might in all probability have been the case, had he gone on in the reckless manner he was accustomed to in England, regardless of all consequences.

Actuated by his own generous impulses,

Lord Merwyn made an ample provision for Florence, who did not, however, live long to enjoy it; and provided for his nephew by settling upon him an estate of four thousand a year. When his mother died, the Earl and Countess brought him up with their own children, and the little fellow loved his uncle and aunt with all the devotion which a child can feel for its parents.

The Earl hearing, in the course of time, that his brother was seriously ill at Hom-burg, went there to see him, and bestowed upon him the utmost brotherly care. But no affection could keep the passion-worn soul within the mortal frame shattered by a thousand dissipations, and after a few weeks' suffering, Henry Hargreave died in his brother's arms, with his last breath begging Florence to forgive him.

THE END.

13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET, JULY, 1866.

MESSRS. HURST AND BLACKETT'S LIST OF NEW WORKS.

MEMOIRS AND CORRESPONDENCE OF

FIELD-MARSHAL VISCOUNT COMBERMERE, G.C.B., &c.
From his Family Papers. By the Right Hon. MARY VISCOUNTESS
COMBERMERE and Capt. W. W. KNOLLYS. 2 v. 8vo, with Portraits. 30s.

"The gallant Stapleton Cotton, Viscount Combermere, was one of those men who belong to two epochs. He was a soldier, actively engaged, nearly ten years before the last century came to its troubled close; and he was among us but as yesterday, a noble veteran, gloriously laden with years, laurels, and pleasant reminiscences. To the last this noble soldier and most perfect gentleman took cheerful part in the duties and pleasures of life, leaving to an only son an inheritance of a great name, and to a sorrowing widow the task of recording how the bearer of the name won for it all his greatness. This has been done, evidently as a labour of love, by Lady Combermere, and she has been efficiently assisted in the military details by Captain Knollys. Apart from the biographical and professional details, the volumes, moreover, are full of sketches of persons of importance or interest who came into connection with Lord Combermere."—*Athenæum*.

"A welcome and gracefully written memorial of one of the greatest of England's soldiers, and worthiest of her sons. It is a most interesting work."—*Morning Post*.

"This biography, abounding in letters and other unpublished materials, is all fresh and trustworthy information, as to the life of a man whose career deserved a record."—*Examiner*.

"All through the lengthened career of this grand old soldier we are enabled to follow him step by step, incident by incident, through the pages of these thoroughly readable and most entertaining volumes."—*Sun*.

"The feeling of respect and regard which the public in general entertained for Lord Combermere, and the love of those who were permitted the honour of closer acquaintance or friendship, will cause these volumes to be received with profound pleasure. They present to us a most complete history of the gallant soldier's professional career, and give an intimate, acquaintance with his private life. If it were possible, they raise the estimation of him as a successful, brave, and able soldier, and add proofs of an affectionate and genial nature to the many which are familiar to us all, and have long since marked him out for a high place in the esteem of men who honour the noble, the wise, and the good."—*Court Journal*.

THE SPORTSMAN AND NATURALIST IN

CANADA. With Notes on the Natural History of the Game, Game Birds, and Fish of that country. By MAJOR W. ROSS KING, F.R.G.S., F.S.A.S. 1 vol. super royal 8vo, Illustrated with beautiful Coloured Plates and Woodcuts. 20s. Elegantly bound.

"In 'The Sportsman and Naturalist in Canada' we have a full, true, and comprehensive record of all the facts concerning American animals which the author was able in a three years' residence to collect. We have these facts in a goodly volume, splendidly illustrated, and with its contents so well arranged that a reference to any description of bird, beast, or fish may be made almost instantly. It is an important contribution to Natural History, and a work the intending traveller will consult once and again, since it gives him the information he most needs, and finds least generally accessible. The book will take its position in the foremost rank of works of its class. Of recent British travellers few can vie with its author in close observation of nature, and in those graces of style and scholarship which make the information contained in his volume as pleasant to obtain as it is valuable to preserve. In fact, since the works of Elliot Warburton and Kinglake, no book of travels with which we are acquainted has been written in a style more clear, forcible, picturesque."—*Sunday Times*.

"The writer of this valuable work has enjoyed advantages rarely possessed by many who publish the results of their inquiries in foreign regions. His accounts of his hunting and fishing experience will be read with considerable interest. The volume has been most splendidly brought out, and the numerous illustrations of the various objects described reflect the highest credit upon the author."—*Observer*.

"To all British sportsmen who may meditate a visit to Canada, or who are curious about its game and fish, this work will prove most valuable."—*The Field*.

13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

MESSRS. HURST AND BLACKETT'S NEW WORKS, NOW READY.

THE HON. GRANTLEY BERKELEY'S LIFE AND RECOLLECTIONS. Vols. III. and IV. completing the Work. 30s., bound.

Among the other distinguished persons mentioned in these volumes are the Emperors Alexander, Nicholas, and Napoleon III.; Kings George IV., William IV., and Leopold I.; Princes Talleyrand, Esterhazy, Napoleon, Puckler Muskau; the Dukes of Sussex, York, Cambridge, Wellington, d'Orleans, d'Angoulême, Brunswick, Manchester, Beaumont, Cleveland, Richmond, Buckingham; Lords Byron, Melbourne, Lansdowne, Holland, Brougham, Alvanley, Yarmouth, Peterham, Craven, Salisbury, Devonshire, Ducie, Glasgow, Malmesbury, Castlereagh, Breadalbane, &c. Sirs Robert Peel, T. Lawrence, W. Knighton, George Dashwood, George Warrender, Lumley Skeffington, Bulwer Lytton, Count d'Orsay, Count de Morny, the Rev. Sydney Smith, Tom Moore, Shelley, Thomas Campbell, Beau Brummell, Theodore Hook, Leigh Hunt, W. S. Landor, James and Horace Smith, Jack Musters, Assheton Smith, &c. Ladies Holland, Jersey, Londonderry, Blessington, Shelley, Lamb, Breadalbane, Morgan, Mrs. Fitzherbert, Mrs. Jordan, Miss Landon, the Countess Guiccioli, &c.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS ON VOLS. 3 AND 4.

"It is pleasant to be told about men of note, or the various phases of high social life, in the light and sparkling manner peculiar to these memoirs. The most fastidious critic will scarcely deny that Mr. Berkeley possesses the gift of writing in an amusing strain on social, sporting, or other general subjects; and that he had the command of abundance of materials for his pen will be proved by his whole work."—*Morning Post*.

"The chief source of gratification to be derived from these, as from the preceding volumes, will be discovered in the references to distinguished persons which crowd every page, showing an acquaintance with a host of royal personages, noblemen, politicians, artists, actors, poets, and wits, which has fallen to the lot of but few members even of aristocratic society."—*Messenger*.

"Mr. Berkeley's new volumes are very pleasant reading indeed. He has stores of anecdotes to tell, and many of these he tells very delightfully. The work is a most amusing repertory of anecdotal recollections, illustrative of the highest classes of society in England."—*Sun*.

"These concluding volumes of Mr. Grantley Berkeley's reminiscences are just as amusing as their predecessors. They are full of interest."—*Press*.

OPINIONS ON VOLS. 1 AND 2.

"A book unrivalled in its position in the range of modern literature. We have here a picture in the recollections of a living man of a state of society which is now superseded, and of which very few relics still remain to be illustrated. In the present case there is allowance to be made for the resentment, rightly or wrongly entertained, for what the author considered to be a family plot and persecution. On the other hand, his keen appreciation of natural objects, his thorough intimacy with his dogs and his horses, is not only an evidence of his powers of observation, but a creditable testimony to his possession of some of the higher humanities. Like William the Conqueror, it is clear that he 'loved the tall deer as if he were their father,' and we cannot but be tolerant of a true sportsman who might have played a better part if he had had better opportunities."—*The Times*.

"A clever, freespoken man of the world, son of an earl with £70,000 a-year, who has lived from boyhood the life of a club-man, sportsman, and man of fashion, has thrown his best stories about himself and his friends, into an anecdotic autobiography. Of course it is eminently readable. Mr. Grantley Berkeley writes easily and well. The book is full of pleasant stories, all told as easily and clearly as if they were related at a club-window, and all with point of greater or less piquancy."—*Spectator*.

"There is a large fund of amusement in these volumes. The details of the author's life are replete with much that is interesting. A book so brimful of anecdote cannot but be successful."—*Athenæum*.

13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

MESSRS. HURST AND BLACKETT'S NEW WORKS—*Continued.*

THE LIFE OF JOSIAH WEDGWOOD. From his Private Correspondence and Family Papers, in the possession of JOSEPH MAYER, Esq., F.S.A., FRANCIS WEDGWOOD, Esq., C. DARWIN, Esq., M.A., F.R.S., Miss WEDGWOOD, and other Original Sources. With an Introductory Sketch of the Art of Pottery in England. By ELIZA METEYARD. Dedicated, by permission, to the Right Hon. W. E. GLADSTONE, Chancellor of the Exchequer. Vol. 1, 8vo, with Portraits and above 100 other Illustrations, price 21s. elegantly bound, is now ready. The work will be completed in one more volume.

This is the Life of Wedgwood to the expected appearance of which I referred at Burslem."—*Extract from a Letter to the Author by the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone.*

"This very beautiful book is the first of two volumes which will contain that Life of Wedgwood which for the last fifteen years Miss Meteyard has had in view, and to which the Wedgwood family, and all who have papers valuable in relation to its subject, have been cordially contributing. In his admirable sketch of Wedgwood, given at Burslem, it was to the publication of this biography that Mr. Gladstone looked forward with pleasure. It is a very accurate and valuable book. To give their fullest value to the engravings of works of art which largely enrich the volume, the biography has been made by its publishers a choice specimen of their own art as book-makers. Neither care nor cost have been grudged."—*Examiner.*

"The appearance of such a work as Miss Meteyard's 'Life of Josiah Wedgwood' is an event of importance in the sister spheres of literature and art. The biographer of our great potter has more than ordinary fitness for the fulfilment of her labour of love. She is an enthusiastic admirer and a practised connoisseur of Ceramic Art, and she brings the pleasant energy of individual taste and feeling to the aid of complete, authentic, and well-arranged information, and the well-balanced style of an experienced *litterateur*. The interest of the book grows with every page. The reader will peruse the numerous interesting particulars of Wedgwood's family life and affairs with unusual satisfaction, and will lay down the work with undoubting confidence that it will rank as a classic among biographies—an exhaustive work of the first rank in its school."—*Morning Post.*

"No book has come before us for some time so stored with interesting information. Miss Meteyard is a biographer distinguished by a clever and energetic style, by delicate judgment, extensive information, and a deep interest in her subject. The history of the Ceramic Art in England, and the biography of the eminent man who brought it to perfection, have evidently been to her a labour of love; and of the spirit and manner in which she has executed it we can hardly speak too highly. The splendid getting up of the work reflects much credit on the house from which it is issued."—*Dublin University Magazine.*

"The biography of Josiah Wedgwood has fallen into good hands. Miss Meteyard has infused into her task a congenial spirit, a cultivated taste, and, in addition to fifteen years' study of her subject, she has been able to enrich her book with a mass of private letters and documents relating to Josiah Wedgwood which have been wholly inaccessible to other writers. These give the work a character of reliable information to which no rival can lay claim. The publishers have spared neither labour nor expense in the costly illustrations of the exquisite artistic gems which adorn the book."—*The Shilling Magazine.*

"It needs no special advertisement to make us aware, so soon as we open the book, that this is the life of the great Wedgwood, executed with an enthusiastic industry and illustrated with a taste which will be sufficient to satisfy Mr. Gladstone himself. Messrs. Hurst and Blackett may be fairly congratulated on having turned out the best English book of the year on art."—*Macmillan's Magazine.*

"In this magnificent volume we welcome one of the very noblest contributions to the history of the Ceramic art ever published. We place it at once and permanently side by side with Bernard Palissy's *Memoirs* and with Benvenuto Cellini's *Autobiography*. An abundance of rare and very precious materials is here admirably put together by the dexterous hand and exquisite taste of Miss Meteyard. A more conscientious discharge of the responsible duties devolving upon the biographer of a really great man has not been witnessed, we believe, since the days of Boswell, the greatest of all biographers."—*Sun.*

13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

MESSRS. HURST AND BLACKETT'S NEW WORKS—*Continued.*

LADY ARABELLA STUART'S LIFE AND

LETTERS: including numerous Original and Unpublished Documents. By ELIZABETH COOPER. 2 vols., with Portrait. 21s.

"The 'Life and Letters of Lady Arabella Stuart' is an unusually good specimen of its class. Miss Cooper has really worked at her subject. She has read a good deal of MSS. and, what is better still, she has printed a good deal of what she has read. The book has a real and substantial historical value."—*Saturday Review*.

"One of the most interesting biographical works recently published. The memoirs have been arranged by Miss Cooper with much care, diligence, and judgment."—*Post*.

"Miss Cooper has laid before us a work of equal value and interest, respecting one of the most romantic and interesting passages in English history, in which the actors are living men and women, not merely historical figures."—*Globe*.

"Miss Cooper's volumes appear rich in documents, and a glance through them leads us to believe that they tell their tale in a straightforward way, and trust for interest to a clear setting forth of facts."—*Examiner*.

"The historical interest of this work is indisputable, and the many letters and documents of the period for the first time published in it, will give it a permanent value."—*Dispatch*.

PRISON CHARACTERS DRAWN FROM LIFE.

BY A PRISON MATRON. Author of 'Female Life in Prison.' 2 v. 21s.

"These volumes are interesting and suggestive."—*Athenaeum*.

"A woman lodged among imprisoned women, with a kindly sympathy, a quick eye, and a mind apt to record clearly its well-directed observations, has something to tell that thousands will be glad to learn. Her quick-witted transcripts of living character are studies that nothing can make obsolete or deprive of interest for living men."—*Examiner*.

"This is a work of the most striking interest. It ought to be widely read and deeply considered, not only by all in authority, or possessed of influence, but by the public in general, to whom the subject is of interest and importance."—*Post*.

"These volumes possess the liveliest interest. The author is both instructive and amusing when depicting the sayings, doings, and characteristics of the prisoners who have been under her care."—*Star*.

SPORT AND SPORTSMEN: A Book of Recol-

lections. By CHARLES STRETTON, Esq. 8vo, with Illustrations. 15s.

"This is an amusing book; as interesting as genuine books of sporting adventures seldom fail to be. The Highlands, Wales, the English counties, Australia, have all been visited by the writer, and we have his adventures in each."—*Globe*.

"Mr. Stretton has succeeded in producing a work descriptive of home scenery, characters, and sports which is full of excitement, and will interest the reader as much as most descriptions of foreign adventures. A charm this book undoubtedly has, and few who begin it, and care at all for field sports, will lay it aside till it is finished."—*Sunday Times*.

GARIBALDI AT HOME: Notes of a Visit to

Caprera. By SIR CHARLES R. McGRIGOR, Bart. 8vo, with Illustrations. 15s.

"Now that Garibaldi is once more about to appear on the scene of action, this book may be regarded as very seasonable. The writer is honest in his admiration, and adds to our knowledge of Garibaldi's life and character."—*Globe*.

"Sir Charles McGrigor's book is full of anecdote and entertaining sketches relative to his visit to Garibaldi. It will command a very extensive circle of readers."—*Observer*.

"This book gives us some faithful and agreeable records of Garibaldi himself, and his daily life at Caprera."—*Examiner*.

13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

MESSRS. HURST AND BLACKETT'S NEW WORKS—*Continued.*

ENGLISH TRAVELLERS AND ITALIAN

BRIGANDS: a Narrative of Capture and Captivity. By W. J. C. MOENS. Second Edition. Revised with Additions. 2 vols., with Portrait and other Illustrations. 21s.

"Mr. Moens had a bad time of it among the Italian Brigands. But his misfortunes are now to himself and to his friends a source of no little entertainment, and we can say for those who listen to his story that we have followed him in his adventures with pleasure. He tells his tale in a clear and simple style, and with that confident manliness which is not afraid to be natural."—*The Times*.

"Mr. Moens has had an experience and an adventure of startling magnitude in these prosaic times of ours. He has seen what no other Englishman has seen, and has done what no one else has done, and has written a bright and charming book as the result."—*All the Year Round*.

"Mr. Moens tells, in this book, of his life among the brigands as their prisoner until the payment of the heavy ransom asked for himself and his friend Mr. Aynsley. Here, then, is a man with a good story to tell. It does not follow as a common law of nature that he happens to know how to tell it; but, for the comfort of all who would like to make an honest story about robbers, full of adventure, recent and quite true, part of their Christmas reading, be it known that Mr. Moens does know how to tell his tale. He tells it faithfully and simply. It is very interesting."—*Examiner*.

"In these volumes, the literary merits of which are numerous, we have the true story of the capture of Mr. Moens by the brigands of South Italy. We have no doubt that the book will be extensively read; we are quite sure that it will do an immense amount of good. It lets in a flood of light upon the dens of these robbers. It will bring to bear upon the whole system the public opinion of Europe."—*Daily News*.

FROM CADET TO COLONEL: The Record of a Life of Active Service. By Major-General Sir THOMAS SEATON, K.C.B. 2 vols. with Illustrations, 21s.

"It is difficult to imagine anything more interesting both to soldiers and civilians than Sir Thomas Seaton's record of his active career. Apart from its amusing contents the work must be viewed as a valuable addition to our literature."—*Athenæum*.

"Here are two volumes of pleasant, racy, personal memoirs by a veteran soldier, who, with the refreshing frankness of his class, gives us all his experiences from the day he took shipping on the Downs as a Cadet under the Old Company, down almost to the present time, when, full of years and honours, he enjoys his *retraite* as a Major-General in the Queen's service, and his well-won decoration as a Knight Commander of the Bath. The writer buckled on his sword in 1822, and made it do good service through the disastrous Cabul campaign and at the last siege of Delhi. Sir Thomas Seaton has, in truth, produced a delightful book."—*United Service Gazette*.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A LIFE OF ADVENTURE. By WILLIAM STAMER. 2 vols. with Portrait. 21s.

"Mr. Stamer has been by turns a sailor, a soldier, a dasher in Paris, a recruit in a foreign legion, a sportsman in America. His book is a story of a wild life, not without a certain vivacity and amusement."—*Athenæum*.

"There is much interesting and exciting matter in this lively and amusing book."—*Reader*.

"The two volumes in which Mr. Stamer has recorded his adventures are of deep and varied interest, and a career so remarkable as his has seldom been described. The volumes are excessively entertaining, and in all the varied scenes through which the author conducts us he is always an intelligent guide and a pleasant friend. We cheerfully recommend his adventures to all who read for amusement. There is, too, much information of positive and practical value to be derived from his work."—*Sunday Times*.

13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

MESSRS. HURST AND BLACKETT'S
NEW WORKS—*Continued.*

ADVENTURES AMONGST THE DYAKS OF BORNEO. By FREDERICK BOYLE, Esq., F.R.G.S. 1 vol. 8vo, with Illustrations. 15s. bound.

"Mr. Boyle's Adventures are very pleasant reading—smart, lively, and indicative of no slight amount of bonhomie in the writer."—*Athenæum*.

"This is an entertaining book. Mr. Boyle saw a good deal of the country, made intimate friendship with a large number of savage chiefs, lived for some time in a native village, and has given us, in an entertaining and humorous style, a very lively and pleasant account of his trip."—*Saturday Review*.

"The information contained in Mr. Boyle's Adventures has the great advantage of being recent, and certainly nothing can surpass the interest conveyed in his pages, which are written with spirit and cleverness. The descriptions of the habits and customs of the people, the climate of the country, with its productions animal and vegetable, and the numberless anecdotes of all kinds throughout the volume, form a work of great interest and amusement."—*Observer*.

IMPRESSIONS OF LIFE AT HOME AND ABROAD. By Lord EUSTACE CECIL, M.P. 1 vol. 8vo. 14s.

"Lord Eustace Cecil has selected from various journeys the points which most interested him, and has reported them in an unaffected style. The idea is a good one, and is carried out with success. We are grateful for a good deal of information given with unpretending good sense."—*Saturday Review*.

"These sparkling papers are remarkably full of sensible thought and solid information. They very cleverly and very pleasantly sum up their author's judgment on many matters of interest."—*Examiner*.

YACHTING ROUND THE WEST OF ENGLAND. By the Rev. A. G. L'ESTRANGE, B.A., of Exeter College, Oxford, R.T.Y.C. 1 vol. 8vo, Illustrated. 15s.

"A very interesting work. We can scarcely imagine a more pleasant and romantic yachting voyage than that of the author of this volume round the rough and rugged west coast of England, which forms the coasts of Cornwall and Devonshire. The bold character of these coasts, the Lizard, Mount St. Michael, the fine old town of Bideford, Gurnard's Head, the rocky Scilly Isles, the small rock on which the Eddystone braves the fury of the storm, and guides the mariner up Channel, are among the attractions which such a voyage afforded; while the many small towns and villages, and their inhabitants, must have yielded a considerable amount of pleasure to those who for the first time visit these interesting counties. We might, if space permitted, give many interesting extracts from the work, which would convey to the reader the same good opinion of the work which we have ourselves formed from its perusal."—*Observer*.

BRIGAND LIFE IN ITALY. By COUNT MAFFEI. 2 vols. 8vo, 28s.

"Two volumes of interesting research."—*Times*.

"Count Maffei's work is obviously of an authentic character. The preface is dated from the Italian Embassy, and the volumes show many evidences of their author having had the advantage of special information not hitherto made public. The volumes must be read by all who would understand the present position of South Italy. They are written in a lively style, and combine the value of history with the entertainment of a romance."—*London Review*.

A PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF THIRTEEN YEARS' SERVICE AMONGST THE WILD TRIBES OF KHONDISTAN, FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF HUMAN SACRIFICE. By Major-General JOHN CAMPBELL, C.B. 1 vol. 8vo, with Illustrations.

"Major-General Campbell's book is one of thrilling interest, and must be pronounced the most remarkable narrative of the present season."—*Athenæum*.

13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

MESSRS. HURST AND BLACKETT'S NEW WORKS—*Continued.*

HISTORIC PICTURES. By A. BAILLIE COCHRANE, M.P. 2 vols. 21s.

"Mr. Baillie Cochrane has published two entertaining volumes of studies from history. They are lively reading. 'My aim,' he says, 'has been to depict events generally known in a light and, if possible, a picturesque manner.' Mr. Cochrane has been quite successful in carrying out this intention. The work is a study of the more interesting moments of history—what, indeed, the author himself calls it, 'Historic Pictures.'"—*Times*.

"Mr. Cochrane gives evidence in his 'Historic Pictures' of sufficient vividness of fancy and picturesqueness in description to make his sketches very lively and agreeable to read."—*Saturday Review*.

COURT AND SOCIETY FROM ELIZABETH TO ANNE, Edited from the Papers at Kimbolton, by the DUKE OF MANCHESTER. *Second Edition.* 2 vols. 8vo, with Fine Portraits.

"The Duke of Manchester has done a welcome service to the lover of gossip and secret history by publishing these family papers. Persons who like to see greatness without the plumes and mail in which history presents it, will accept these volumes with hearty thanks to their noble editor. In them will be found something new about many men and women in whom the reader can never cease to feel an interest—much about the divorce of Henry the Eighth and Catherine of Arragon—a great deal about the love affairs of Queen Elizabeth—something about Bacon, and (indirectly) about Shakspeare—more about Lord Essex and Lady Rich—the very strange story of Walter Montagu, poet, profligate, courtier, pervert, secret agent, abbot—many details of the Civil War and Cromwell's Government, and of the Restoration—much that is new about the Revolution and the Settlement, the exiled Court of St. Germain, the wars of William of Orange, the campaigns of Marlborough, the intrigues of Duchess Sarah, and the town life of fine ladies and gentlemen during the days of Anne. With all this is mingled a good deal of gossip about the loves of great poets, the frailties of great beauties, the rivalries of great wits, the quarrels of great peers."—*Athenæum*.

"These volumes are sure to excite curiosity. A great deal of interesting matter is here collected, from sources which are not within everybody's reach."—*Times*.

HAUNTED LONDON. By WALTER THORNBURY. 1 vol. 8vo, with numerous Illustrations by F. W. FAIRHOLT, F.S.A.

"Haunted London is a pleasant book."—*Athenæum*.

"A very interesting, amusing, and instructive book. It is well illustrated by Mr. Fairholt."—*Saturday Review*.

"Mr. Thornbury points out to us the legendary houses, the great men's birth-places and tombs, the haunts of poets, the scenes of martyrdom, the battle-fields of old factions. The book overflows with anecdotal gossip. Mr. Fairholt's drawings add alike to its value and interest."—*Notes and Queries*.

A JOURNEY FROM LONDON TO PERSE- POLIS; including WANDERINGS IN DAGHESTAN, GEORGIA, ARMENIA, KURDISTAN, MESOPOTAMIA, AND PERSIA. By J. USSHER, Esq., F.R.G.S. Royal 8vo, with numerous beautiful Coloured Illustrations. 42s. Elegantly bound.

"This is a very interesting narrative. Mr. Ussher is one of the pleasantest companions we have met with for a long time. We have rarely read a book of travels in which so much was seen so rapidly and so easily, and in which the scenery, the antiquities, and the people impressed the author's mind with such gentlemanly satisfaction. Mr. Ussher merited his success and this splendid monument of his travels and pleasant explorations."—*Times*.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE. By CARDINAL WISEMAN. 1 vol. 8vo, 5s.

"A noble tribute to the great poet."—*John Bull*.

"This work is evidence of an exquisite refinement of thought and a singular gracefulness of intellectual expression, which it would be difficult to equal."—*Observer*.

13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

MESSRS. HURST AND BLACKETT'S NEW WORKS—*Continued.*

REMINISCENCES OF THE OPERA. By BEN-

JAMIN LUMLEY, Twenty Years Director of Her Majesty's Theatre.
8vo, with Portrait of the Author by Count D'Orsay. 16s.

"Mr. Lumley's book, with all its sparkling episodes, is really a well-digested history of an institution of social importance in its time, interspersed with sound opinions and shrewd and mature reflections."—*Times*.

"As a repository of anecdote, we have not for a long while met with anything at all comparable to these unusually brilliant and most diversified Reminiscences. They reveal the Twenty Years' Director of Her Majesty's Theatre to us in the thick and throng of all his radiant associations. They take us luringly—as it were, led by the button-hole—behind the scenes, in every sense of that deceiving and profoundly attractive phrase. They introduce us to all the stars—now singly, now in very constellations. They bring us rapidly, delightfully, and exhilaratingly to a knowledge so intimate of what has really been doing there in the Realm of Song, not only behind the scenes and in the green-room, but in the reception-apartment of the Director himself, that we are *as courant* with all the whims and oddities of the strange world in which he fills so high and responsible a position. Reading Mr. Lumley, we now know more than we have ever known before of such Queens of the Lyric stage as Pasta, Catalini, Malibran, Grisi, Sontag, and Piccolomini—of such light-footed fairies of the ballet as Taglioni, Fanny Ellsler, and Cerito—of such *primi tenori* as Rubini, Mario, Gardoni, and Giuglini—of such baritones as Ronconi and Tamburini—or of such *bassi profondi* as the wondrous Standigl and the mighty Lablache. Nay, Mr. Lumley takes us out of the glare of the footlights, away from the clang of the orchestra, into the dream-haunted presence of the great composers of the age, bringing us face to face, as it were, among others, with Rossini, Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer, Verdi, Balfe, and Donizetti. He lets us into the mysteries of his correspondence—now with Count Cavour, now with Prince Metternich—for, in his doings, in his movements, in his negotiations, Sovereigns, Prime Ministers, Ambassadors, and Governments are, turn by turn, not merely courteously, but directly and profoundly interested! Altogether, Mr. Lumley's book is an enthralling one. It is written with sparkling vivacity, and is delightfully interesting throughout."—*Sun*.

MEMOIRS OF JANE CAMERON, FEMALE

CONVICT. By a Prison Matron. 2 vols.

"This narrative, as we can well believe, is truthful in every important particular—a faithful chronicle of a woman's fall and rescue. It is a book that ought to be widely read."—*Examiner*.

TRAVELS AND ADVENTURES OF AN OFFICER'S WIFE IN INDIA, CHINA, AND NEW ZEALAND.

By Mrs. MUTER, Wife of Lieut.-Colonel D. D. MUTER, 13th (Prince Albert's) Light Infantry. 2 vols. 21s.

"Mrs. Muter's travels deserve to be recommended, as combining instruction and amusement in a more than ordinary degree."—*Athenæum*.

TRAVELS ON HORSEBACK IN MANTCHU

TARTARY: being a Summer's Ride beyond the Great Wall of China. By GEORGE FLEMING, Military Train. 1 vol. royal 8vo, with Map and 50 Illustrations.

"Mr. Fleming's narrative is a most charming one. He has an untrodden region to tell of, and he photographs it and its people and their ways. Life-like descriptions are interspersed with personal anecdotes, local legends, and stories of adventure, some of them revealing no common artistic power."—*Spectator*.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE. By VICTOR HUGO.

Authorized English Translation. 1 vol. 8vo.

"A notable and brilliant book about Shakespeare."—*Athenæum*.

ENGLISH WOMEN OF LETTERS. By JULIA

KAVANAGH, Author of "Nathalie," "Adele," "French Women of Letters," "Beatrice," &c. 2 vols.

13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

MESSRS. HURST AND BLACKETT'S
NEW WORKS—*Continued.*

THE BEAUTIFUL IN NATURE AND ART.

By MRS. ELLIS. Author of 'The Women of England,' &c. 1 vol. crown 8vo, with fine Portrait. 10s. 6d.

"With pleasure her numerous admirers will welcome a new book by the popular authoress of 'The Women of England.' A very charming volume is this new work by Mrs. Ellis. Its aim is to assist the young students of art in those studies and subjects of thought which shall enable them rightly to appreciate and realise that oft-quoted truth, 'A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.' 'The Truthfulness of Art,' 'The Love of Beauty,' 'The Love of Ornament,' 'Early dawn of Art,' and various chapters of a kindred nature, are followed by others descriptive of 'Learning to Draw,' 'Imitation,' 'Light and Shadow,' 'Form,' 'Colour,' 'Lady's Work,' &c. The work will interest many fair readers. It deserves a welcome and very cordial commendation."—*Sun*.

"The author of 'The Women of England' has written a book which deserves to be highly commended. It is intended for the young of her own sex, and it will be strange if they do not find it attractive as well as useful and instructive. It is the work of a keen-sighted, thoughtful, sensible, and experienced writer. It is calculated to train the young eye, the young hand, and the young mind to appreciation and adoption of whatever there is of beauty in the storehouses of nature and the galleries of art; and above all, it is likely to promote general cultivation and general usefulness."—*Illustrated News*.

LIFE IN JAVA; WITH SKETCHES OF THE
JAVANESE. By WILLIAM BARRINGTON D'ALMEIDA. 2 vols. post
8vo, with Illustrations.

"'Life in Java' is both amusing and instructive. The author saw a good deal of the country and people not generally known."—*Athenæum*.

ADVENTURES AND RESEARCHES among the
ANDAMAN ISLANDERS. By Dr. MOUAT, F.R.G.S., &c. 1 vol.
demy 8vo, with Illustrations.

"Dr. Mouat's book, whilst forming a most important and valuable contribution to ethnology, will be read with interest by the general reader."—*Athenæum*.

MEMOIRS OF QUEEN HORTENSE, MOTHER
OF NAPOLEON III. Cheaper Edition, in 1 vol. 6s.

"A biography of the beautiful and unhappy Queen, more satisfactory than any we have yet met with."—*Daily News*.

THE OKAVANGO RIVER: A NARRATIVE
OF TRAVEL, EXPLORATION, AND ADVENTURE. By
C. J. ANDERSSON, Author of "Lake Ngami." 1 vol. Illustrations.

TRAVELS IN THE REGIONS OF THE
AMoor, AND THE RUSSIAN ACQUISITIONS ON THE CONFINES OF INDIA
AND CHINA. By T. W. ATKINSON, F.G.S., F.R.G.S., Author of
"Oriental and Western Siberia." Dedicated, by permission, to
HER MAJESTY. Royal 8vo, with Map and 83 Illustrations.

THE LIFE OF J. M. W. TURNER, R.A., from
Original Letters and Papers. By WALTER THORNBURY. 2 vols.
8vo, with Portraits and other Illustrations.

THE CHURCH AND THE CHURCHES; or,
THE PAPACY AND THE TEMPORAL POWER. By Dr
DÖLLINGER. Translated by W. B. MAC CABE. 8vo.

THE NEW AND POPULAR NOVELS, PUBLISHED BY HURST & BLACKETT.

THE WILD FLOWER OF RAVENSWORTH.

By the Author of "John and I," "Doctor Jacob," &c. 3 vols.

THE WIFE'S ERROR. By LADY BLAKE. 3 vols.

LORDS AND LADIES. By the Author of "Margaret and her Bridesmaids," &c. 3 vols. (*In August.*)

KING'S BAYNARD. By the Hon. Mrs. GEORGE GIFFORD. 3 vols.

"A tale of absorbing interest."—*Morning Advertiser.*

FELICIA'S DOWRY. By Mrs. FITZMAURICE OKEDEN. 3 vols.

"'Felicia's Dowry' is the work of a highly-cultivated mind; the characters are well drawn, the language good, the interest fully sustained, and the moral of the story excellent."—*Messenger.*

SIR OWEN FAIRFAX. By The LADY EMILY PONSONBY. Author of the 'Discipline of Life,' &c. 3 vols.

"Lady Emily Ponsonby writes like a lady, and like a lady who knows how to write."—*Athenæum.* "A very excellent and pleasant story."—*Sun.* "A very interesting and readable novel."—*Star.*

MIRK ABBEY. By the author of 'LOST SIR MASSESBERD,' 'The Clyffards of Clyffe,' &c.. 3 vols.

"A spirited and amusing story."—*Pall Mall Gazette.* "An admirable and most fascinating story."—*John Bull.* "An ably written tale. The style is clear and nervous."—*Reader.* "The best of the author's novels."—*Star.*

BOUND TO THE WHEEL. By JOHN SAUNDERS. Author of 'ABEL DRAKE'S WIFE,' &c. 3 vols.

"A spirited and absorbing novel."—*Star.* "A very interesting story."—*Sun.* "The idea of the hero is original and very carefully worked out."—*Spectator.*

FALKNER LYLE. By MARK LEMON. 3 vols.

"A clever and interesting story. It is well written, and so good that our friends should read it for themselves."—*Athenæum.*

BEYOND THE CHURCH. 3 vols.

"'Beyond the Church' is extremely interesting. It is a work that merits careful and thoughtful reading. It will amply repay the same in the mere current entertainment of a well-written book, full of amusing and spirited sketches of life and character, but far more in the vigorous and thoughtful insight which it gives into the problems of religious thought and belief which are occupying the world at the present moment. It is genial in tone, generous in feeling, and reverent in its spirit. It is a book to be read and returned to more than once."—*Athenæum.*

GILBERT RUGGE. By the Author of 'A First Friendship,' &c. 3 vols.

"A well-written and interesting story. It is sure to become popular with all who take pleasure in original and clever delineation of character."—*Reader.*

MILLY'S HERO. By the Author of 'Grandmother's Money,' &c. 3 vols.

"The situation of two women in love with the same man has always been a favourite subject with writers of fiction. The author of 'Milly's Hero' has depicted with considerable skill the moral attitude of two women under such circumstances. The book is worth reading."—*Saturday Review.*

THE NEW AND POPULAR NOVELS, PUBLISHED BY HURST & BLACKETT.

A NOBLE LIFE By the Author of 'John Halifax, Gentleman,' 'Christian's Mistake,' &c. 2 vols.

"This is another of those pleasant tales in which the author of 'John Halifax' speaks, out of a generous heart, the purest truths of life."—*Examiner*.

"'A Noble Life' is remarkable for the high types of character it presents, and the skill with which they are made to work out a story of powerful and pathetic interest."—*Daily News*.

"A beautifully written and touching tale. It is a noble book—that will take deep root in the memory."—*Post*.

"Few men and no women will read 'A Noble Life' without feeling themselves the better for the effort."—*Spectator*.

"In a 'Noble Life' the author of 'John Halifax' has given us a book which is really refreshing reading. The book is not overloaded with characters. The interest is centred on some two or three persons, but unusual care has been bestowed upon their delineation. Nor ought we to pass unnoticed the grace with which the story is told. For its style only it is worth reading, so easy and pure is the diction. Add to this the interest of the story, and it will be readily understood that 'A Noble Life' is a book to be got and read as soon as possible."—*Star*.

HESTER'S SACRIFICE. By the Author of 'St. Olave's,' 'Janita's Cross,' &c. 3 vols.

"'Hester's Sacrifice' will assuredly be read with pleasure. The book abounds in merit and beauty."—*Post*.

"This work will be read to the very last page with unbroken interest. It is one of the very best stories we have had from the author. It is full of the same power of observation, refinement, and grace which mark all her books."—*Herald*.

AGNES. By MRS. OLIPHANT, Author of "The Life of Edward Irving," &c., 3 vols.

"'Agnes' is a novel superior to any of Mrs. Oliphant's former works."—*Athenaeum*.

"Mrs. Oliphant is one of the most admirable of our lady novelists. In her works there are always to be found high principle, good taste, sense, and refinement. The grace of her style, its tranquillity, its unstudied but by no means negligent elegance, have a peculiar charm. 'Agnes' is a story wrought out with the skill and unexaggerated pathos with which Mrs. Oliphant's readers are familiar. Its pathetic and refined beauty will appeal irresistibly to all readers."—*Post*.

CHRISTIAN'S MISTAKE. By the Author of "John Halifax, Gentleman," &c. 1 vol.

"A more charming story, to our taste, has rarely been written. Within the compass of a single volume the writer has hit off a circle of varied characters all true to nature—some true to the highest nature—and she has entangled them in a story which keeps us in suspense till its knot is happily and gracefully resolved; while, at the same time, a pathetic interest is sustained by an art of which it would be difficult to analyse the secret. It is a choice gift to be able thus to render human nature so truly, to penetrate its depths with such a searching sagacity, and to illuminate them with a radiance so eminently the writer's own. Even if tried by the standard of the Archbishop of York, we should expect that even he would pronounce 'Christian's Mistake' a novel without a fault."—*Times*.

"This is a story good to have from the circulating library, but better to have from one's bookseller, for it deserves a place in that little collection of clever and wholesome stories that forms one of the comforts of a well-appointed home."—*Examiner*.

BLOUNT TEMPEST. By the Rev. J. C. M. BELLEW, Third Edition, Revised. 3 vols.

"This book is well written. The story is interesting and full of incident. The accounts of the various old families and family places are extremely well done. The picture of life at Hampton Court is very good, and there is an amusing account of a commemoration day at Oxford."—*Athenaeum*.

Under the Especial Patronage of Her Majesty.

Published annually, in One Vol., royal 8vo, with the Arms beautifully engraved, handsomely bound, with gilt edges, price 31s. 6d.

LODGE'S PEERAGE AND BARONETAGE, CORRECTED BY THE NOBILITY.

THE THIRTY-FIFTH EDITION FOR 1866 IS NOW READY.

LODGE'S PEERAGE AND BARONETAGE is acknowledged to be the most complete, as well as the most elegant, work of the kind. As an established and authentic authority on all questions respecting the family histories, honours, and connections of the titled aristocracy, no work has ever stood so high. It is published under the especial patronage of Her Majesty, and is annually corrected throughout, from the personal communications of the Nobility. It is the only work of its class in which, *the type being kept constantly standing*, every correction is made in its proper place to the date of publication, an advantage which gives it supremacy over all its competitors. Independently of its full and authentic information respecting the existing Peers and Baronets of the realm, the most sedulous attention is given in its pages to the collateral branches of the various noble families, and the names of many thousand individuals are introduced, which do not appear in other records of the titled classes. For its authority, correctness, and facility of arrangement, and the beauty of its typography and binding, the work is justly entitled to the place it occupies on the tables of Her Majesty and the Nobility.

LIST OF THE PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

Historical View of the Peerage.
Parliamentary Roll of the House of Lords.
English, Scotch, and Irish Peers, in their orders of Precedence.
Alphabetical List of Peers of Great Britain and the United Kingdom, holding superior rank in the Scotch or Irish Peerage.
Alphabetical list of Scotch and Irish Peers, holding superior titles in the Peerage of Great Britain and the United Kingdom.
A Collective list of Peers, in their order of Precedence.
Table of Precedency among Men.
Table of Precedency among Women.
The Queen and the Royal Family.
Peers of the Blood Royal.
The Peerage, alphabetically arranged.
Families of such Extinct Peers as have left Widows or Issue.
Alphabetical List of the Surnames of all the Peers.

The Archbishops and Bishops of England, Ireland, and the Colonies.
The Baronetage alphabetically arranged.
Alphabetical List of Surnames assumed by members of Noble Families.
Alphabetical List of the Second Titles of Peers, usually borne by their Eldest Sons.
Alphabetical Index to the Daughters of Dukes, Marquises, and Earls, who, having married Commoners, retain the title of Lady before their own Christian and their Husband's Surnames.
Alphabetical Index to the Daughters of Viscounts and Barons, who, having married Commoners, are styled Honourable Mrs.; and, in case of the husband being a Baronet or Knight, Honourable Lady.
Mottos alphabetically arranged and translated.

"Lodge's Peerage must supersede all other works of the kind, for two reasons: first, it is on a better plan; and secondly, it is better executed. We can safely pronounce it to be the readiest, the most useful, and exactest of modern works on the subject."—*Spectator*.

"A work which corrects all errors of former works. It is a most useful publication."—*Times*.

"A work of great value. It is the most faithful record we possess of the aristocracy of the day."—*Post*.

"The best existing, and, we believe, the best possible peerage. It is the standard authority on the subject."—*Herald*.

NOW IN COURSE OF PUBLICATION,

HURST AND BLACKETT'S STANDARD LIBRARY

OF CHEAP EDITIONS OF

POPULAR MODERN WORKS,

ILLUSTRATED BY MULLAIS, HOLMAN HUNT, LEBECH, BIRKET FOSTER,
JOHN GILBERT, TENNIEL, &c.

Each in a single volume, elegantly printed, bound, and illustrated, price 5s.

VOL. I.—SAM SLICK'S NATURE AND HUMAN NATURE.

"The first volume of Messrs Hurst and Blackett's Standard Library of Cheap Editions forms a very good beginning to what will doubtless be a very successful undertaking. 'Nature and Human Nature' is one of the best of Sam Slick's witty and humorous productions, and well entitled to the large circulation which it cannot fail to obtain in its present convenient and cheap shape. The volume combines with the great recommendations of a clear, bold type, and good paper, the lesser, but attractive merits, of being well illustrated and elegantly bound."—*Post*.

VOL. II.—JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN.

"This is a very good and a very interesting work. It is designed to trace the career from boyhood to age of a perfect man—a Christian gentleman, and it abounds in incident both well and highly wrought. Throughout it is conceived in a high spirit, and written with great ability. This cheap and handsome new edition is worthy to pass freely from hand to hand as a gift book in many households."—*Examiner*.

"The new and cheaper edition of this interesting work will doubtless meet with great success. John Halifax, the hero of this most beautiful story, is no ordinary hero, and this his history is no ordinary book. It is a full-length portrait of a true gentleman, one of nature's own nobility. It is also the history of a home, and a thoroughly English one. The work abounds in incident, and is full of graphic power and true pathos. It is a book that few will read without becoming wiser and better."—*Scotman*.

VOL. III.—THE CRESCENT AND THE CROSS.

BY ELIOT WARBURTON.

"Independent of its value as an original narrative, and its useful and interesting information, this work is remarkable for the colouring power and play of fancy with which its descriptions are enlivened. Among its greatest and most lasting charms is its reverent and serious spirit."—*Quarterly Review*.

"A book calculated to prove more practically useful was never penned than 'The Crescent and the Cross'—a work which surpasses all others in its homage for the sublime and its love for the beautiful in those famous regions consecrated to everlasting immortality in the annals of the prophets, and which no other writer has ever depicted with a pencil at once so reverent and so picturesque."—*Sun*.

VOL. IV.—NATHALIE. BY JULIA KAVANAGH.

"'Nathalie' is Miss Kavanagh's best imaginative effort. Its manner is gracious and attractive. Its matter is good. A sentiment, a tenderness, are commanded by her which are as individual as they are elegant."—*Athenæum*.

VOL. V.—A WOMAN'S THOUGHTS ABOUT WOMEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN."

"A book of sound counsel. It is one of the most sensible works of its kind, well-written, true-hearted, and altogether practical. Whoever wishes to give advice to a young lady may thank the author for means of doing so."—*Examiner*.

[CONTINUED ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES.]

HURST AND BLACKETT'S STANDARD LIBRARY (CONTINUED).

VOL. VI.—ADAM GRAEME. BY MRS OLIPHANT.

"'Adam Graeme' is a story awakening genuine emotions of interest and delight by its admirable pictures of Scottish life and scenery. The eloquent author sets before us the essential attributes of Christian virtue, their deep and silent workings in the heart, and their beautiful manifestations in life, with a delicacy, a power, and a truth which can hardly be surpassed."—*Post*.

VOL. VII.—SAM SLICK'S WISE SAWS AND MODERN INSTANCES.

"We have not the slightest intention to criticise this book. Its reputation is made, and will stand as long as that of Scott's or Bulwer's Novels. The remarkable originality of its purpose, and the happy description it affords of American life and manners, still continue the subject of universal admiration. To say thus much is to say enough, though we must just mention that the new edition forms a part of Messrs Hurst and Blackett's Cheap Standard Library, which has included some of the very best specimens of light literature that ever have been written."—*Messenger*.

VOL. VIII.—CARDINAL WISEMAN'S RECOLLECTIONS OF THE LAST FOUR POPES.

"A picturesque book on Rome and its ecclesiastical sovereigns, by an eloquent Roman Catholic. Cardinal Wiseman has treated a special subject with so much geniality, that his recollections will excite no ill-feeling in those who are most conscientiously opposed to every idea of human infallibility represented in Papal domination."—*Athenæum*.

VOL. IX.—A LIFE FOR A LIFE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN."

"We are always glad to welcome Miss Mulock. She writes from her own convictions, and she has the power not only to conceive clearly what it is that she wishes to say, but to express it in language effective and vigorous. In 'A Life for a Life' she is fortunate in a good subject, and has produced a work of strong effect."—*Athenæum*.

VOL. X.—THE OLD COURT SUBURB. BY LEIGH HUNT.

"A delightful book, that will be welcome to all readers, and most welcome to those who have a love for the best kinds of reading."—*Examiner*.

"A more agreeable and entertaining book has not been published since Boswell produced his reminiscences of Johnson."—*Observer*.

VOL. XI.—MARGARET AND HER BRIDESMAIDS.

"We recommend all who are in search of a fascinating novel to read this work for themselves. They will find it well worth their while. There are a freshness and originality about it quite charming."—*Athenæum*.

VOL. XII.—THE OLD JUDGE. BY SAM SLICK.

"The publications included in this Library have all been of good quality; many give information while they entertain, and of that class the book before us is a specimen. The manner in which the Cheap Editions forming the series is produced deserves especial mention. The paper and print are unexceptionable; there is a steel engraving in each volume, and the outsides of them will satisfy the purchaser who likes to see books in handsome uniform."—*Examiner*.

VOL. XIII.—DARIEN. BY ELIOT Warburton.

"This last production of the author of 'The Crescent and the Cross' has the same elements of a very wide popularity. It will please its thousands."—*Globe*.

HURST AND BLACKETT'S STANDARD LIBRARY

(CONTINUED).

VOL. XIV.—FAMILY ROMANCE; OR, DOMESTIC ANNALS OF THE ARISTOCRACY.

BY SIR BERNARD BURKE, ULSTER KING OF ARMS.

"It were impossible to praise too highly this most interesting book. It ought to be found on every drawing-room table. Here you have nearly fifty captivating romances with the pith of all their interest preserved in undiminished poignancy, and any one may be read in half an hour."—*Standard*.

VOL. XV.—THE LAIRD OF NORLAW.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MRS MARGARET MAITLAND."

"The Laird of Norlaw fully sustains the author's high reputation."—*Sunday Times*.

VOL. XVI.—THE ENGLISHWOMAN IN ITALY.

"We can praise Mrs Gretton's book as interesting, unexaggerated, and full of opportune instruction."—*The Times*.

VOL. XVII.—NOTHING NEW.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN."

"'Nothing New' displays all those superior merits which have made 'John Halifax' one of the most popular works of the day."—*Post*.

VOL. XVIII.—FREER'S LIFE OF JEANNE D'ALBRET.

"Nothing can be more interesting than Miss Freer's story of the life of Jeanne D'Albret, and the narrative is as trustworthy as it is attractive."—*Post*.

VOL. XIX.—THE VALLEY OF A HUNDRED FIRES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MARGARET AND HER BRIDESMAIDS."

"We know no novel of the last three or four years to equal this latest production of the popular authoress of 'Margaret and her Bridesmaids.' If asked to classify it, we should give it a place between 'John Halifax' and 'The Caxtons.'"—*Herald*.

VOL. XX.—THE ROMANCE OF THE FORUM.

BY PETER BURKE, SERJEANT AT LAW.

"A work of singular interest, which can never fail to charm. The present cheap and elegant edition includes the true story of the Colleen Bawn."—*Illustrated News*.

VOL. XXI.—ADELE. BY JULIA KAVANAGH.

"'Adèle' is the best work we have read by Miss Kavanagh; it is a charming story full of delicate character painting."—*Athenæum*.

VOL. XXII.—STUDIES FROM LIFE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN."

"These 'Studies from Life' are remarkable for graphic power and observation. The book will not diminish the reputation of the accomplished author."—*Saturday Review*.

VOL. XXIII.—GRANDMOTHER'S MONEY.

"We commend 'Grandmother's Money' to readers in search of a good novel. The characters are true to human nature, the story is interesting, and there is throughout a healthy tone of morality."—*Athenæum*.

VOL. XXIV.—A BOOK ABOUT DOCTORS.

BY J. C. JEAFFRESON, ESQ.

"A delightful book."—*Athenæum*. "A book to be read and re-read; fit for the study as well as the drawing-room table and the circulating library."—*Lancet*.

HURST AND BLACKETT'S STANDARD LIBRARY (CONTINUED).

VOL. XXV.—NO CHURCH.

"We advise all who have the opportunity to read this book. It is well worth the study."—*Athenæum*.

VOL. XXVI.—MISTRESS AND MAID.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN."

"A good wholesome book, gracefully written, and as pleasant to read as it is instructive."—*Athenæum*. "A charming tale charmingly told. All the characters are drawn with life-like naturalness."—*Herald*. "The spirit of the whole book is excellent. It is written with the same true-hearted earnestness as 'John Halifax.'"—*Examiner*.

VOL. XXVII.—LOST AND SAVED.

BY THE HON. MRS NORTON.

"'Lost and Saved' will be read with eager interest. It is a vigorous novel."—*Times*. "A novel of rare excellence; fresh in its thought, and with a brave soul speaking through it. It is Mrs Norton's best prose work."—*Examiner*.

VOL. XXVIII.—LES MISÉRABLES. BY VICTOR HUGO.

AUTHORISED COPYRIGHT ENGLISH TRANSLATION.

"The merits of 'Les Misérables' do not merely consist in the conception of it as a whole; it abounds, page after page, with details of unequalled beauty. In dealing with all the emotions, doubts, fears, which go to make up our common humanity, M. Victor Hugo has stamped upon every page the hall-mark of genius."—*Quarterly Review*.

VOL. XXIX.—BARBARA'S HISTORY.

BY AMELIA B. EDWARDS.

"It is not often that we light upon a novel of so much merit and interest as 'Barbara's History.' It is a work conspicuous for taste and literary culture. It is a very graceful and charming book, with a well-managed story, clearly-cut characters, and sentiments expressed with an exquisite elocution. The dialogue especially sparkle with repartee. It is a book which the world will like. This is high praise of a work of art, and so we intend it."—*Times*.

VOL. XXX.—LIFE OF THE REV. EDWARD IRVING.

BY MRS OLIPHANT.

"A good book on a most interesting theme."—*Times*.

"A truly interesting and most affecting memoir. Irving's Life ought to have a niche in every gallery of religious biography. There are few lives that will be fuller of instruction, interest, and consolation."—*Saturday Review*.

"Mrs Oliphant's Life of Irving supplies a long-felt desideratum. It is copious, earnest, and eloquent. Irving, as a man and as a pastor, is exhibited with many broad, powerful, and life-like touches, which leave a strong impression."—*Edinburgh Review*.

VOL. XXXI.—ST OLAVE'S.

"This charming novel is the work of one who possesses a great talent for writing, as well as experience and knowledge of the world. 'St Olave's' is the work of an artist. The whole book is worth reading."—*Athenæum*.

VOL. XXXII.—SAM SLICK'S TRAITS OF AMERICAN HUMOUR.

"Dip where you will into this lottery of fun, you are sure to draw out a prize. These racy 'Traits' exhibit most successfully the broad national features of American humour."—*Post*.





